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ABSTRACT

The whole language approach to reading instruction has been gaining the support of many educators and teachers, and the aim of this thesis is to show how this movement has gained its momentum. The first chapter of the thesis deals with the history of the whole language movement and provides an overview of the research literature that supports the concepts inherent in whole language approaches. In the review of the literature, the thesis examines in depth Piaget's cognitive developmental theories and Goodman and Smith's psycholinguistic view of reading. The second chapter of the thesis discusses the application of the research in practice as it applies to children in kindergarten. The thesis explains in detail additional methods specifically applying to whole language, such as Don Holdaway's shared-book experience. The third chapter examines the needs in the field and where the field is heading in the future. The thesis discusses the need for additional research, along with the needs for teacher education and new testing methods, concluding with a discussion of how kindergarten teachers feel about the whole language approach in their classrooms. (Ten annotated references and a list of 131 references without annotations are attached.) (RS)

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The Application of the Whole Language Approach to Reading
Instruction to Children in Kindergarten

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Abstract

In schools today the whole language approach to reading instruction has been gaining the support of many educators and teachers. This paper attempts to show how this movement has gained its momentum.

Chapter I deals with the history of the whole language movement and an overview of the literature on research that supports the concepts inherent in whole language approaches. Research from the fields of philosophy, psychology and education have all had important impacts on what is considered today to be the whole language approach. Included in this review of the literature are explanations of Piaget's cognitive developmental theories and Goodman and Smith's psycholinguistic view of reading. How these theories complement each other and have influenced the whole language movement are discussed in depth.

Chapter II discusses the application of the research into practice as it applies to children in kindergarten. Much of the whole language approach is familiar to kindergarten teachers, but the research adds validity to their practice. Additional methods, specifically applying to whole language, such as Don Holdaway's shared- book- experience, are explained in detail.

Chapter III concludes with what this writer and others see as the needs in the field and where the field is heading towards in the future. The need for additional research is discussed, along with needs for teacher education and parent support. The needs for administrative support and new testing methods are also included. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what

kindergarten teachers currently feel about the whole language approach in their classrooms.

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The Application of the Whole Language Approach to Reading
Instruction to Children in Kindergarten

CHAPTER ONE: Historical Overview and Perspective

Introduction:

In recent years there has been much talk about the "new" whole language approach to reading instruction. However the idea is not new. The interpretation of the philosophy into current methods of instruction has been evolving for a long time, but has been gaining in popularity among educators for the past dozen years. Some educators have been moving away from traditional basal readers as the primary tool for teaching early reading skills (Goodman, K., 1989; Goodman, Y., 1989). Cambourne's (1988) definition of whole language encompasses the essence of the idea:

In a teaching-learning context, a whole language approach means that the literacy act or artifact being demonstrated needs to be sufficiently 'whole' to provide enough information about the various systems and sub-systems of language, so that learners, if they decide to engage, will have the data available for working out how all the pieces fit together and interact with each other. (p.204)

Whole language approaches which integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening activities using the child's own language and experiences with all kinds of children's literature are the

basis for the instruction. The principles of whole language include having children immersed in a literature-rich environment which is both non-threatening and encouraging. The children have much input into the nature of their instruction and are given many opportunities to experience printed text in all its forms (Holdaway 1979; Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, K., 1989).

Reading Defined:

In teaching reading, as with many areas of instruction, there have been many methods used with varying degrees of success over the years. This, of course, has led to much controversy and research as to which is the best method for teaching reading.

But what is reading? Here also there have been many definitions proposed by different scholars in an attempt to understand the nature of reading. Recent research has paid considerable attention to three conceptualizations to the definition of reading. These are called top-down, bottom-up and interactive (Stanovich, 1980; Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986).

The view of the top-down process states that readers bring information based on past experiences with their world to the act of reading. Readers pay little attention to words and word parts but, using their past experiences, make predictions on meaning as they read (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986).

Conversely, in the bottom-up concept, the important element in reading is the text, not what the reader brings to the text. Careful attention is paid to the words, which are synthesized and

put together to form meaning (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986).

The third model, interactive processing, is a combination of the first two. Fluent readers use both their conceptual background and word features in order to assimilate and understand the text (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986).

Although there has not been universal agreement as to the "correct" model of reading, most authorities agree on some basic points. These are that: reading ability is closely related to language ability; reading is interacting with printed language; the product of this interaction is comprehension; and reading is directly affected by an individual's continuous interaction with his environment (Smith, 1971). Perhaps the most simple definition, as stated by Cambourne (1988), is the best:

"Reading is comprehension." (p. 158)

It is of no use to be able to decode the words without comprehension.

Major Methods Used to Teach Reading in the Recent Past:

In the past 40 years three major approaches to reading instruction have dominated reading curriculum. These are the basal reader approach, skills approaches, which emphasized phonics, and the learning experience approach. In the late 1950's, basal readers were first introduced. These books emphasized controlled vocabulary and sequential skill development. Texts are graded according to difficulty of vocabulary and sentence structure (Gutnecht, 1989). Skills

approaches are often based on phonics and stress letter-sound relationships. This is often incorporated into basals. It is a synthetic approach where reading is taught from part to whole. Emphasis is placed on mastering skills for word identification first, and vocabulary and comprehension skills next. The look-say approach was part of some basals with words taught out of context. This is the bottom-up view discussed earlier. William S. Gray's research, published in 1919, provided the framework for the future basal readers (Pickering, 1989).

The learning experience approach uses children's own stories, words and sentences from the child's experiences dictated to and written down by the teacher. This is then read and shared. It has been widely used since the 1960's, especially by early childhood teachers. The learning experience approach is incorporated into the whole language approach (Pickering, 1989; Fromberg, 1987).

For the last 10-15 years, no matter which philosophy of reading instruction was used, a pattern emerged: each child's level of performance in a set of skills was measured; the child was then placed on the proper level in a set program; pre- and post-testing was done; the progress was monitored; and the child's level of competence in each specified skill was recorded. This back to basics and accountability was prevalent in the mid-1970's through the 1980's. It is only now and in the recent past being challenged (Gutnecht, 1989; 1990).

Holdaway (1979) feels that these methodologies used to teach

reading in the schools have developed along narrow lines for the sake of expediting the preparation and the evaluation of student's progress. Teaching methodologies were developed for each subject as if different types of learning were involved. Emphasis was placed on skills that could be readily measured. He further states that many teachers were not well educated, and so the structure of basal reading programs appealed to them.

Reading, in western culture, is the essence of education. Periodically over time it would become apparent that not all children were learning to read, even when problems of children with special needs were sorted out. It was hoped that by attending school all children would learn to read and write effectively. Heated debate would occur over this failure, which was often attributed to poor teaching methodology. For more than the last thirty years debate has continued as to which is the best method. There would be an outcry from those who felt things were better when they went to school. Parents have been most concerned with the schools' ability to teach their children to read. Each major teaching method, emphasizing a particular aspect of reading, has about equal numbers of successes, but many failures as well. Each method had convincing arguments making it correct, only to have them be thrown out in acceptance of the next "new" method (Holdaway, 1979). Holdaway (1979) points out however that all of these methods focused on some perceptual, low level skills and did not see literacy as a whole process. But while all this debate went on, children all over the world

learned to speak.

Whole language is a comparatively new term used in the literature on reading and writing. Pickering (1989) searched through major reading and writing texts through the early 1980's using the Education Index and the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) for the term whole language. In the July to December 1981 CIJE he found whole language listed as a heading. Then it was not listed as a separate heading again until the June 1984 issue, and has been used ever since. Whole language has now been recognized as a separate reading philosophy with its own heading (Pickering, 1989).

Today's whole language approach to reading instruction focusses on the learner and the learner's needs and interests. Children are actively involved and interested in their learning. They are relating the new information they are learning to what they already know. Children are immersed in a literature-rich environment which is child centered. Respect is shown to all learners and what they bring to the learning situation. In this way learning will occur (Goodman, Y., 1989). A major concept among whole language advocates is that the learning must be meaningful to the students.

As the theory, principles and practices of whole language are discussed in this paper, it will become apparent why whole language has been an especially important influence in many of today's kindergarten classrooms. Many early childhood teachers have known for a long time that the natural language learning

children acquire at home should be continued in school. The language experience approach, immersion in good literature, especially predictable literature, can be springboards into all areas of the curriculum (Fromberg, 1987). It is important for children to use language naturally and to be encouraged to expand on their own skills. Fromberg (1987) further states that, "theoretically, it should be no more different to learn to read than it is to learn to speak." p.193 She continues that teachers should understand the ways children learn to speak and they should apply this understanding in helping children increase all their language skills, including reading. Learning to speak and read involves children's interactions with adults modeling correct syntax, and the child's imitation of these behaviors.

History:

In looking back into the history of the major ideas and methods used to teach reading, one can see how we have evolved to the point where we are today in education. Today's use of the whole language approach, with various interpretations and methodologies, has its roots going back to the seventeenth century. Whole language represents the integration of theories from research in language processes, learning and cognitive development.

The whole language movement is solidly based on research from different disciplines, especially that done in the twentieth century. But there were theorists and educators, such as John

Amos Comenius, as far back as the seventeenth century, who believed that children can learn new information by using what is already familiar to them, by manipulation of concrete objects, and by talking about what they are learning using their native language (Goodman, K., 1989; Comenius, 1657). These beliefs are similar to ones held by whole language proponents today. Comenius created the first picture book made for children which became the most popular textbook in Europe for over 100 years (Goodman, Y., 1989; Bardeen, 1887). It was first published in 1657 in Latin and soon afterward translated to an English and Latin edition. It contained pictures of things considered by him to be the most important things in the world for a child to become familiar (Comenius, 1657). It was translated into many languages. Comenius believed that children need to enjoy their learning experiences in order to learn. Even Comenius believed that unmeaningful learning has no place in the classroom. He strongly believed that children should be taught in their native languages, and that is why he had Charles Hoole translate the first edition into English from the Latin. This was in reaction to the Latin that was used in classrooms in Europe in his day (Goodman, Y., 1989; Comenius, 1657; Bardeen, 1887).

John Dewey, a major philosopher of this century, thought learners should be the center of curriculum development and that language must be integrated with all other studies. He believed that the things we learn in school do not fit into separate, neat compartments. All learning must be integrated. School must be

related to real life in all its aspects, taking into account culture and information from various disciplines. Children must be presented with varieties of materials and facts to talk about and manipulate (Evans, 1975; Goodman, Y., 1989).

Cognitive developmental theorists (psychologists), like Jean Piaget of Switzerland, have also influenced the whole language movement. His studies show how children construct knowledge internally by building on knowledge previously acquired. Children are very active in their own discovery of the world by playing, as opposed to academic instruction. People construct ideas, concepts and moralities. He saw that not all knowledge is transmitted by adults to children. Hence, five year olds doing dittos are not actively involved in discovering the answers to problems. He showed that children should be allowed to learn from their own experiences and develop their own conceptualizations of the world around them by use of external objects. Children organize their world in their own ways (Evans, 1975; Goodman, Y., 1989).

Piaget proposed that language acquisition was dependent on cognition, so any teaching aimed at intellectual development will promote language development as well (Giddings, 1990). Through activities children will learn. In the classroom, the teacher must offer activities and objects which stimulate cognitive growth. Language should be used to probe and discuss the problems the children encounter with varied objects and situations (Pflaum, 1974).

Lev S. Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, whose work was posthumously collected and published in Russian in 1934, discussed his concept of the zone of proximal development. It states that the child is able to solve problems interdependently with the help of those more advanced. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of the teacher in a student's language development. The language development can be supported or hindered by the teacher. The adult models correct language structure to the child (Goodman, Y., 1990; Evans, 1975; Pflaum, 1974). Whole language teachers support learning but see themselves as mediators who facilitate learners' interactions with the environment. Teachers learn both with and from their pupils. In Vygotsky's early work he also looks at the early writing experiences children have that occur naturally (Goodman, Y., 1990).

Literature based on research with a holistic perspective of the reading process began in the 1960's and 1970's. Prior to that time, most theorists believed reading to be a conglomerate of skills which begins with the learning of individual words and letters. There was much talk of word recognition and part-to-whole teaching (Guthrie, 1980). Some of the beginnings of the whole language movement as we see it today are attributed to the works of Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith as early as the 1960's. Goodman's psycholinguistic view of reading says that reading is holistic (Guthrie, 1980; Goodman, K., 1973). He believes that cueing systems are necessary for reading. It does not matter

however if a miscue occurs. It only matters that the reader understands what he is reading and that others understand what he is writing. Goodman further stated that emphasis on decoding is inappropriate (Goodman, 1967; Goodman, 1973). The more familiar the reader is with the topic in the text, the less the reader needs to rely on the printed text for understanding. He refers to reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game." The knowledge the reader brings to the text allows the reader to predict information as he reads. The reader uses graphophonic, semantic, and syntactic cues in reading. This is a top-down or conceptually driven approach. Kenneth Goodman (1973) sees reading as a natural process and part of language development as a whole. He states that readers bring to reading all of their accumulated experiences, language and thoughts in order to predict meanings in the text. Smith (1971) and others support this analysis.

Smith (1971) defined reading comprehension as making sense of what you read by using what you know. The reader is expected to use prior knowledge and experience with language to get at meaning from print. Smith further states that the predictions are based on graphophonic cues seen visually in context along with the non-visual information that comes from the brain. This is where we can find support for the use of CLOZE procedures in increasing reading comprehension (Holdaway, 1979). Smith believes children learn to read just as they learn to speak. The psycholinguists believe that meaning guides and facilitates the perception, rather than recognizing words first and then getting

at their meaning (Holdaway, 1979 and others).

Therefore Goodman and Smith were proponents of the concept that a child learns to read by reading, just as a child first learns to speak by speaking. Psycholinguistic theory tells us that reading involves thinking along with the author of the text using his/her background of experience to make predictions about the text and its meaning (Smith, 1971; Goodman, K., 1973, 1989). Absolute accuracy in word recognition is not completely necessary as long as any miscues do not distort meaning (Goodman, K., 1973).

Piaget's cognitive stage theory complements psycholinguistic theories of fluent reading by clarifying how readers acquire and then use prior knowledge (Smith, 1971). As Chomsky's (1972) research indicates, young children who have been exposed to a variety of language through having books of all kinds read aloud to them, and read by themselves later, are more able to comprehend and use language at higher linguistic levels than children who have not had these experiences with books.

Goodman and Smith tried to show that by using background information and experiences, readers predict as they read along and confirm or refute their predictions (Goodman, K., 1989). In a whole language classroom, readability of text is irrelevant because whether or not a text is hard or easy for readers depends upon predictability of that particular text for that particular reader (Kravitz, 1991). Goodman (1989) asserts that it is this predictability that makes a text easy to read. Teachers saw the

need for more predictable books, communicated this to publishers, and more predictable books for beginning readers became available (Goodman, K., 1989).

Whole language, with its holistic perspective, also has a research base on readers who learned to read without any formal instruction (Gutnecht, 1990). An important contribution was made by Dolores Durkin (1966). She did a longitudinal study which concluded that children are able to learn to read without specific instruction from adults. She reported that the children she studied acquired reading ability by experiencing whole texts and having good role models at home. Clark's later study supported Durkin's findings (Goodman, Y., 1990; Clark, 1976).

Reading for meaning, according to whole language proponents, is closer to children's previous experiences with language than is the association of written symbols (letters) with the sounds they represent. Before formal reading instruction begins, children learn to speak and use meaningful language through listening and speaking. These early language experiences occur in natural settings. Teaching reading out of the context to which a child is familiar forces the child to make a connection between reading and the synthetic approaches. Asking a child to crack the letter-sound code has only limited rewards and cannot be a self-sustaining activity. Reading skills must be taught through direct involvement with real language (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986; Holdaway, 1979 and others).

Norton (1989) stated that in order for a child to develop reading skills, teachers must know that oral language skills rely on informal techniques of building language acquisition. The teacher needs to build a warm and supportive rapport with the class. Interaction with the children and continued encouragement by the teacher are necessary for continued language development. The teacher must use the child's interests to motivate language and, thus, reading.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963) in her book, Teacher, really was describing whole language as beginning reading instruction, although the terminology of whole language was not as yet being used. She advocated personalizing reading instruction by finding out what the children already know and building on it. Her idea was that literacy instruction should involve integrating reading and writing activities based on experiences of the learners. In discussing whole language, reading and writing are not seen as separate entities but as complementing processes.

Don Holdaway (1979), in New Zealand, developed the concept of the shared-book experience. His work was influenced by the work of Marie Clay, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Jeanette Veatch and others. Holdaway sees whole language as allowing learners to take increasing control over their own reading behavior. The early reader brings a sense of predictability, testing and correcting as he tries to make sense out of print. He explains it is nothing at all like learners building up a storehouse of skills learned out of context. The learners become increasingly

more confident in their ability to make sense out of the text. Holdaway stated: "We see learners teaching themselves to read."
p.91

Holdaway's research into the attributes of the bedtime story experience on the future literacy of a young child led him to develop the shared-book-experience. He applied the intimacy and encouragement of the one-on-one bedtime story experience for use in a classroom with a large group of young children. The fact that it is no longer one-on-one, but a large group does not take away from the effectiveness. He compared this to models of church services and festivals and other meaningful, cultural group experiences that transmit oral and written tradition. The visual intimacy of the print is compensated for by Big Books with large print so all the children can view the text as it is read. Just as a parent points to words and stops and discusses, so can a teacher using Big Books. Holdaway noted that even though there have been shifts in the ways literacy has been taught in schools, at home the methods have remained constant. He points out that oral language skills in infants are the result of a developmental-learning environment that does not overemphasize one skill over another. (He does, however, realize the differences in richness of the literary environment of one home from another.)

Recent History:

The power of literature has also been explored by Glazer

(1986), Norton (1987), Cambourne (1988) and many others. These educators have developed literature-centered teaching strategies. They dispute packaged programs, such as basals, as being synthetic and out of context of what literacy should be. In response to the popularity of the whole language approach, publishers have begun incorporating whole books of real literature into their programs. But skill graded lessons and scope and sequence charts are still central to these programs. It has also been noted by this writer that packaged whole language programs have begun to appear on the market. But there is dispute as to whether or not packaged programs are really "whole language." A major concept in whole language theory is that the teacher works with students and seizes opportunities that arise during the reading process as learners take charge of their own learning. Teachers' professional expertise is recognized as they make their own decisions fitting to each learning situation, as opposed to following the "script" in a basal or other packaged programs.

In the past dozen years, much research has been done on emergent literacy in young children. The research has confirmed what many early childhood educators, especially those who believed in a child-centered, holistic perspective on language learning and teaching, have been doing in classrooms since the late 1800's (Teale and Martinez, 1988). Chall states that especially in the 1920's, children's literature was the basis of reading instruction (Aaron et al., 1990). Studies have shown

that the learning of literacy begins very early in life. Teale and Martinez (1988), in their review of literature on theory based, successful early childhood programs, found that these programs offered developmentally appropriate reading, writing and speaking opportunities that are meaningful and functional. Recent research also shows that interaction with books and classroom storybook reading time increases reading comprehension and oral language skills.

Wendy Kasten and Barbara Clarke (1989) conducted a year long study of the emerging literacy of preschool and kindergarten children in two Florida communities. Their results showed that children in the whole language group performed better on several standardized tests for reading readiness than the children in more traditional classrooms. These children knew more about the meaningful aspects of reading. They also expressed greater enthusiasm for books and stories and were developing more positive attitudes towards reading.

Reading/Writing Connection:

Donald Graves (1983), Lucy Calkins (1986) and other researchers began doing research into the teaching of writing. Whole language, being holistic in nature, incorporates writing and reading, as well as speaking and listening, into the literacy approach. All of the language arts are taught not as isolated skills, but as part of real language experiences. Vygotsky's early work looked at the early writing experiences children have

that occur naturally (Goodman, Y., 1990). During the 1920's and 1930's Gesell and Ilg studied children's early writing behavior. In the 1930's, Hildreth in the United States and Legrun in Germany noted that young children who had not yet begun school used many strategies in a systematic fashion in their efforts to learn to write (Goodman, Y., 1990). But it was not until the 1970's that researchers studied the concepts children had acquired about the nature of writing. Yetta Goodman speculates that researchers had been overlooking the connection early writing had with children's art work. Early scribbles were described as art, not writing attempts. Smith (1971) asserts that children learn to write by writing. Lucy Calkins did extensive research on what she calls the writing process, which will be discussed further in chapter II.

Another concept in whole language is that of evaluation of the learners' progress as an ongoing activity in the classroom. Just as learners take charge of their own learning, they also must participate in their own evaluation. This is especially evident in the writing process where children learn to write, edit, rewrite and publish as they work towards their final product.

Teacher Involvement:

As can be seen, whole language is a new view of an old theory on how children become literate. In the decades of the 1920's and 1930's, some teachers were discontent with the then

popular teaching methods. Although the term "whole language" had not as yet been coined, these teachers spontaneously developed whole language programs based on what they saw as a need for changes in the way children were being taught. Yetta Goodman (1989) notes that for the second half of this century some teachers have been realizing that children and teachers needed to take charge of the learning in their classrooms in order to solve problems that were meaningful to themselves. Views have changed on how language is learned and the teacher's role has been examined. In 1978 Dorothy Watson and others formed a teacher support group in Columbia, Missouri called Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL). Kenneth Goodman and Yetta Goodman wrote an occasional paper in 1979 titled, "A Whole-Language Comprehension-Centered Reading Curriculum." In Winnipeg, Canada, in 1980, Child-Centered, Experience Based Learning Workshops (CEL) were presented by Ethel Buchanan and Orin Cochran. New ideas were emerging on the roles of language, teachers and learners in education (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Analytical Perspectives on the Whole Language Movement:

In analyzing the immense amount of literature on whole language theory and practice there are two common denominators in all the interpretations: 1) literature is used as the primary material for reading instruction and 2) the structural support practices of basal reading programs or other synthetic approaches have been eliminated (Giddings, 1990). The theoretical base for

the literature based instruction focuses mostly on the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology. According to whole language supporters, children become literate by being immersed in a literature rich learning environment and by being encouraged and supported in their encounters with literacy. Reading instruction should be kept whole, and not fragmented.

Holdaway (1979) very strongly speaks of the integration of all language learning:

In spoken - language acquisition we see some of these same apparent oppositions as features of healthy functioning. In the listening / speaking complex, infants operate both analytically and synthetically from the beginning, sorting meaningful words from larger utterances and simultaneously struggling with the precise articulatory details at the phonemic level. Spoken language acquisition is characterized by 'integrated function.' This is so sensible and right, both in the growth of speech and the growth of reading, that it is difficult to understand why so much energy has been wasted on such artificial problems in the 'great debate' about methods of teaching reading. Perhaps Jeanne Chall's famous locution, 'Reading: the Great Debate,' should be changed to 'Reading: The False Debate,' for there is little of greatness about it.

p.26

This concurs with William S. Gray's (and other's) philosophy that language must be integrated into all learning. Chapter II will discuss how the trend towards the whole language approach of teaching reading is currently being applied in many kindergarten classrooms. The reading methods presented in the next chapter have been developed based on learning theory and the psycholinguistic interpretations of the reading process. It will become apparent how these reading programs presented derive from the research base just discussed.

Annotated References

Cambourne, B. (1988). The Whole Story: Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom. Auckland, N.Z.: Ashton Scholastic.

Brian Cambourne researched how literacy learning occurs by observing in many classrooms. He concluded that learning must occur in a naturalistic environment.

He points out that the methods of teaching reading most teachers were taught to use sabotage literacy learning. He further states that the traditional methods are not based on sound research.

He presents a whole language approach to literacy learning which, he says, frees the teacher to create and learn along with the children. He states that this leads to highly literate and confident readers and writers.

He presents many examples of strategies to use in a whole language classroom. Many examples and explanations proliferate the text.

Glazer, J.E. (1986). Literature for Young Children. (2nd. ed.). Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.

This book is designed to be used by teachers who work with primary age children. The book discusses the ways children's literature can be used in developmentally appropriate ways in schools. Each chapter begins with a review of research on educational theory pertinent to the chapter. Extensive examples

of books and strategies are explained. The books suggested are presented in various ways that will help the teacher select and use quality literature in interesting ways.

Chapters one and two introduce the variety of literature for children, explain how to select books and poetry, and provide suggestions. Chapter three talks about grouping types of literature for children so they can compare and contrast the choices.

Chapters four through eight discuss the opportunities books offer in supporting children's language, cognition, morality and creativity. Specific teaching strategies are offered with explanations. The last chapter suggests the many ways a book can be presented, and stresses guidelines for planning an appropriate literature program.

Gutnecht, B. (1990). All the King's Horses and All the King's Men: Basic Skills and Whole Language. Paper presented at the Curriculum Assistance Conference of the ECIA Chapter I Basic and Migrant Programs, Mar. 1, 1990. Tampa, FL. ERIC, ED 319 016.

In this paper, Gutnecht points out that language does not work effectively if it is not whole. He says that the basic skills approaches with which many students are taught in the primary grades are the cause for many of the reading problems that occur by 3rd. or 4th. grade.

He states that school districts are becoming aware of the shortcomings of many basal reader programs and are switching

materials and methods towards literature based instruction. He offers concrete suggestions to help teachers make the transition to whole language.

He concludes by saying that reading instruction must be part of an integrated program of all the language arts and not taught in isolation.

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CHAPTER TWO: Current State of the Art

Introduction:

In discussing what is happening today in kindergarten classrooms whose reading programs are based on a whole language approach, one cannot make a blanket statement to cover all kindergartens whose teachers follow the whole language philosophy. But the fact that each classroom is unique in its activities and approach is an important aspect of whole language instruction. Built into the whole language approach is tremendous flexibility. The methods provide for meeting the needs of individual learners (Freeman, 1990). Of course, meeting the needs of learners requires a great deal of flexibility, creativity and knowledge of whole language research and practices. The children's needs are met, rather than having the children fit into the mold that suits a packaged reading program. This requires constant observation and evaluation by the teacher. It also requires that the teacher be actively interacting and participating in activities and language with the children. Constant decision making goes on in order to guide the children through their discoveries and learning (Holdaway, 1979).

Kenneth Goodman (1989) states that research in psychology has shown that past experiences and schema of readers influences comprehension. Experienced teachers already knew this and used this knowledge in their teaching. Academicians now see that there is much to learn from these teachers and their methods as

it relates to whole language.

Goodman continues that the current whole language research is multidisciplinary, although there is not enough of it. He further states it includes research being done in the fields of psychology, linguistics, literary criticism, semiotics, rhetoric, ethnography, artificial intelligence and education.

As a result of the lack of conclusive research, teachers and practitioners are themselves integrating new theory into practice.

There is much international literature being published to support new ideas in whole language. The information involves Canadians, Britons, Americans, New Zealanders and Australians who are developing and supporting integration of new ideas into practice. Groups of teachers in Nova Scotia, New England, the Southwestern United States, England and Australia are using their experiences with whole language instruction to write articles in the professional journals for other teachers to read. These teachers are finding that in their whole language classrooms, students are learning faster and producing more work than the teachers ever thought possible.

Further, Goodman states that the whole language movement is so dynamic that innovative practice is moving ahead of research. The methods are based on sound, scientifically based theory underlying the whole language concepts.

Literature on whole language theory, research and practice is being published in abundance in all the major journals related

to reading and education. As examples, this writer was able to find articles relating to whole language in every recent issue of The Reading Teacher that was checked. The entire issue of the November 1989 issue of The Elementary School Journal was devoted to various aspects of whole language instruction. It was also noted that in the upcoming December 1991 issue of "Pre- K Today" several articles on whole language as it relates to early childhood will be included and highlighted. The articles include current research and practice. Teachers are sharing their methodology with fellow teachers.

Zarillo (1989) also points out that there are numerous articles being published on literature based reading programs. The popularity of the whole language movement among educators can also be seen at national reading conventions. In California, The English-Lanaguage Arts Framework was adopted in 1987, which mandated a literature-based curriculum in all schools.

In speaking to a number of kindergarten teachers in the New York metropolitan area, this author discovered that some school administrators are encouraging teachers to learn about whole language and to adapt their instruction to include this current trend. Other administrators, however, are discouraging teachers from changing their methods of teaching reading and are insisting that teachers continue to use basals and to follow them word-for-word. Other teachers are adapting their instruction with basal reader programs and incorporating them into a more holistic approach to their reading instruction and including more trade

books in their lessons. Goodman states that in the last ten years a large group of teachers have been building their understanding of whole language and are changing their teaching to include whole language. Some teachers have defied school policies and continued with whole language because that is their belief (Aaron et al, 1990).

Whole language has become such a popular topic of discussion in education today, that this writer has recently heard several reports on the topic on radio and television. On November 9, 1991, for example, Gary Tuchman of Cable News Network did a report from a book fair in New York. He discussed some of the concepts inherent in whole language and how publishers are responding to educators' suggestions for Big Books and stories that will engage children in relevant texts by publishing more children's literature. Strickland states that one of the reasons children's book sales have increased is because teachers are spending up to 10% of their income on books in order to have them in their classrooms (Aaron et al., 1990).

ABILITY GROUPING:

Some teachers have expressed concern about traditional ability grouping in kindergarten (Lamme and Lee, 1990). In whole language classrooms, rather than permanent ability groupings of pupils, teachers use flexible groups that may change daily (Goodman, K., 1989). At any one time, different groups may be doing different things. Kenneth Goodman (1989) says that this is a very dynamic area of whole language teaching now as whole

language teachers move away from traditional practices and create their own holistic alternatives. They have asked principles to allow formal testing only at the end of the school year to encourage heterogeneous grouping. Some principals support these changes. Others are concerned about how this new approach will affect scores on standardized reading tests.

TEACHER EDUCATION:

Teachers are sharing ideas at grade level meetings. They plan thematic units collaboratively. Teachers are becoming empowered to try new things as they discover more interesting ways to teach reading (Lamme and Lee, 1990).

School districts are forming whole language workshops and requiring teachers to attend. Some teachers are able to go to universities and participate in whole language courses. This author is aware of kindergarten teachers in several districts who have participated in whole language workshops in their districts. An example is New York City Community School District 24 in Queens which required all kindergarten to second grade teachers to attend a series of whole language workshops this past spring. Some instruction occurred in local schools and some was at St. John's University under the direction of Dr. Richard Sinatra. Lamme and Lee (1990) talk about teachers who took in-service workshops in whole language using Lucy Calkin's (1986) The Art of Teaching Writing as a major focus. Teachers are attending conferences and listening to presentations by other teachers who have made the transition to whole language.

Other teachers have been able to attend summer institutes on whole language and the writing process, such as the workshops at Teachers College.

On the college and graduate level, education students receive lectures and whole courses on topics related to whole language instruction. College courses and in-service education are encouraging teachers to read professional literature for support of the new programs. Literature is their link to the outside professional community (Lamme and Lee, 1989).

Many kindergarten teachers see whole language as a natural way to move children into reading and writing (Martin and Waldon, 1988). Most kindergarten teachers believe that with positive experiences with their language children will develop positive perceptions of themselves as readers and writers. The teachers believe that all the language arts areas of listening, speaking, writing and reading should be integrated into the entire day's activities. The teacher must be thoroughly familiar on how the different language arts areas are related to each other.

Kindergarten teachers, who have for a long time believed in the philosophy of developmentally appropriate teaching of young children, are finding validity for their beliefs in the whole language movement (Gothard and Russel, 1990; Martin and Waldon, 1988; and others). This is evident in the abundance of whole language articles related to kindergarten curriculum in the professional journals. Many teachers are excited about the whole language approach and its application to children in

kindergarten. They view it as a natural way of having children learn to read and write. They believe that if children have positive experiences with reading and writing, they will develop positive perceptions of themselves as readers, writers and learners.

The teacher's role has become more that of facilitator as children become more confident and independent as readers and writers (Lamme and Lee, 1990; Giddings, 1990; Pickering, 1989; and others). Teachers must constantly evaluate what is happening in the class. The program is constantly adjusted as a result.

MULTICULTURAL ISSUES:

As stated, an important concept in the whole language approach is in meeting the needs of the learners. This ties in very well with today's issues concerning multi-cultural education. Increased sensitivity to the needs of all people in our society has led educators to realize that reading programs for children should include literature by and about people and children of all cultural groups (Norton, 1987). As children choose books for themselves to read, some might benefit from reading books about their own personal heritage, as well as that of others. Even basal reading programs today are sensitive to these multicultural issues. Acknowledging differences among children carries the responsibility of providing them with appropriate books to meet their specific needs.

Reading failure has been a major problem of children from low socio-economic backgrounds. These are often minority

children. The social problems these children live with often contribute to their lack of enriching experiences outside of school, as well as low self-esteem.' (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986). These children can benefit from reading about people and events whose culture is similar to their own. Research done by Donna Norton (1989) and others showed that providing children with positive multi-cultural literature and activities related to the literature can improve reading success and attitudes towards minorities. But Norton also states that the introduction of such books must be accompanied by appropriate interactions (Norton, 1987). The whole language approach provides the vehicle for this.

Additionally, through multi-ethnic literature, children of the majority culture learn to respect the values and contributions of minority groups in our country (Norton, 1987).

Don Holdaway (1979) first began his research and work into the holistic approach while working with a depressed, rural community of New Zealand Maori children. He was a young teacher at the time and he learned much just by "kid-watching." He saw from these children that literacy could be developed from the songs and chants of their native culture. He saw that the children's fascination with the stories led more directly to reading and writing skills than any of his carefully prepared lessons in word recognition. He then began to read early articles by Kenneth Goodman and others in The Reading Teacher. These studies validated what he felt was right through his work

with the children.

Holdaway further asserts that the learning experience approach is particularly suitable for diverse groups of young children. He developed his shared-book-experience techniques specifically for this group. He feels their needs lie in familiarity with the text and using learning experience approaches enables the children to see the link between oral and written language.

Research Into Practice:

A variety of methods that kindergarten teachers who follow a whole language approach in their classrooms today will be discussed. These methods have been developed by educators using a research base.

Now it is recognized by educators that some of the natural behaviors of young children's experiences with books at home are important observations in research findings today. Observing what children do naturally have led to recommendations for practice in the classroom. These behaviors are recognized as important steps in learning to read. Children who ask to hear the same book read to them repeatedly often match some of the words they hear with the words they see without formal instruction in word recognition (Cullinan, 1986). Much of this is based on the successes that researchers like Cambourne and Holdaway in New Zealand have achieved.

Taking a glance into a whole language kindergarten

classroom, one might think it looks like any other classroom of desks, books and bulletin boards. However, noticeably different will be the abundance of language all around the room (Cambourne, 1988). Things in the environment are labeled, such as desk, table, chair, door, etc. Experience charts the children and teacher have written are hanging in appropriate areas. Desks and chairs are grouped into tables of four to six children, so children can interact and work together. Children's attempts at using literature and written language are evident. These are models to the children of how language is used. The activities that occurred in the room dictate its ever changing appearance (Martin and Waldon, 1988).

Lamme and Lee (1990) give a very colorful description of several whole language kindergarten classrooms. They describe each activity and part of the room as totally integrated into the theme the children are studying. In one classroom, the children were studying oceans. Stuffed paper fish hung from the ceiling with scalloped blue plastic that made the whole room look like the ocean. Next to a child-made mural of an ocean scene was a chart where children had written, using invented spelling, about what they had drawn. The walls were covered with ocean scene paintings and collages. At one table, children were making sponge paintings of fish that looked like Swimmy in Leo Lionni's (1963) book, Swimmy. At other interest centers, children were making dioramas out of various materials. Children referred to pictures in books as reference for their projects. Some children

were writing stories on sea life. All around the room, children were discussing how to spell words and to solve problems. They were actively involved in their learning.

According to Morrow and Rand (1991), the physical environment of the classroom is extremely important for developmentally appropriate learning situations to occur, but its importance is often underestimated. They further indicate that recent research by psychologists and educators indicates that the proper classroom environment encourages and supports the kind of play that experts agree is necessary to learning and development. The behavior and role of the teacher is part of the environment. Morrow and Rand (1991) conducted a study to determine how the classroom environment could be changed to encourage play, which in turn should promote literacy in kindergarten and preschool children. Their rationale for the study was that the design of classroom environments would have positive influences on literacy learning. Mandel and Rand based their hypothesis on Piaget's findings of the importance of play in developing representational thought. Through play the child builds on previous experiences by assimilating new information with past experiences, as well as Vygotsky's theory that play allows a child to exceed the bounds of the immediate stimulus and learns to use symbolic and abstract thought.

Many others who did research on various aspects of the early childhood classroom environment influenced the hypothesis of Morrow and Rand in this study. Three groups were compared: 1).

the paper, pencil and book with adult guidance group; 2). the thematic materials without adult guidance group, and 3). the traditional curriculum control group. The results of the study showed that children in the paper, pencil and book with adult guidance group engaged in more use or simulation of reading and writing activities than the other two groups. Children in the thematic materials without adult guidance group engaged in more reading activities than the other groups. They concluded that modifications of the classroom environment can have an important impact on emerging literacy behavior.

Morrow and Rand (1991) suggest classroom applications reflecting their results. Themes selected for play areas and materials should be related to subjects being studied in the class. Suggestions were made for a bakery, veterinarian's office, fast food place and other themes. Menus, order pads, prescription pads, recipes, etc. were suggested to be included in the center to promote writing.

Results of Morrow and Rand's study offer some general guidelines for promoting literacy through dramatic play in a kindergarten and preschool room. When use of reading and writing materials are encouraged through play they are likely to promote emerging literacy behaviors. Materials should be kept in organized, marked containers. Teachers should suggest and model uses for the materials. Materials should be changed periodically to keep interest level high. All reading and writing attempts should be accepted and encouraged as legitimate. Teachers should

keep notes and examples of their observations of literacy behaviors for use in assessment.

THEMATIC APPROACHES:

Traditionally teachers have planned instruction using the teachers' manuals of textbooks (Goodman, K., 1989). Since whole language integrates all aspects of language learning, teachers who ascribe to this philosophy are finding that organizing teaching around thematic units that can last for several weeks and incorporate all the subject areas (science, social studies, reading, art, music) allows for long term and daily planning.

Linda Lamme and Pam Lee (1990) discuss how Pam Lee, a kindergarten teacher, changed her curriculum from a skills based approach to a whole language approach centered around themes found in literature, art, films, charts, journals and projects. There was never a limit to the vocabulary encountered and the teacher soon discovered that children could read such words as caterpillar, butterfly and chrysalis after encountering these words through the reading activity processes in the classroom.

Additionally, state Lamme and Lee, the teacher found the thematic units exciting for the children and herself. She found her role changing to that of facilitator as the children became more independent. The teacher observed the children becoming more confident in themselves as readers and writers. The teacher felt empowered to try new techniques. She found teaching more interesting and exciting. Her enthusiasm spread to the children and to her fellow teachers, who now began to have weekly meetings

to share ideas and discuss progress. She found that she learned from the children and they guided her. As stated in chapter 1, Yetta Goodman (1989) calls whole language teachers "kid watchers." The kindergarten teacher was constantly evaluating what was going on in the classroom and making changes as needed.

One example of a theme unit given by Huck and Kerstetter (1987) was a unit on giants. The teacher began by reading Fin M'Coul, The Giant of Knockmany Hill (de Paola). The teacher made a chart of all the things the children knew about giants. Then they brainstormed as a group and made a semantic web. The teacher researched the 30 best relevant titles of books and brought them into the classroom. All of the daily work centered around giants. Discussions, writing, reading, creating and thinking proliferated. There were no worksheets for the children to color in giants. They made their own giants from gathered materials.

In Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985) the overuse of workbooks and worksheets was highly criticized. It was stated that 79% of reading instruction occurs with these worksheets in classrooms today and that it is unrelated to year by year gains in reading proficiency. In the giant unit, mentioned above, children were totally immersed in concrete, literary events and enjoying it. They were becoming readers and applying what they learned.

In a classroom guide by Sarah Whyte (1988) on the use of Big

Books as the basis for thematic units, there are many examples of lesson plans using the Big Books that follow a whole language approach. This writer found these to be excellent examples using principles of whole language teaching. Whyte's source for the books is Wright Company Big Books.

One kindergarten teacher, Susan Benedict (1984), writing in Learning, created theme units based on letters of the alphabet. The letter of the week was integrated in all the many and varied activities for the week, including reading about characters whose names begin with the letter and cooking snacks related to the letter. When the letter "B" was studied, for example, the children ate bagels from the bakery while listening to Beethoven.

Recently, both researchers and teachers have been studying and using an instructional strategy called semantic mapping. This method helps students build on prior knowledge and organize new information. The method is seen by whole language teachers as an alternative to traditional pre-reading and vocabulary exercises in basal readers. As with much in whole language, this method is not new, but has recently been rediscovered due to the acceptance of the importance of prior knowledge to reading comprehension. It has been shown to be an effective technique of activating students' schemata to aid in comprehension and composition. Story maps and teacher-made graphic organizers are most often used with kindergarten children to serve as visual, non-verbal representations of ideas and concepts (Heimlich and Pittelman, 1986). This is particularly useful during thematic

units, so children can brainstorm ideas related to the topic being studied, both before and after a reading of relevant text.

THE SHARED-BOOK-EXPERIENCE:

Basically, the whole language approach in early reading, as in kindergarten, is based on the model of the bedtime story routine as described by Durkin's (1966) research. An adult shares a book with a child, sometimes pointing to words. When this model is transferred to the classroom, an entire group of children must see the text and hear the story. This led to the shared-book-experience described by Holdaway (1979) and discussed earlier. The Big Books, exact replicas of regular sized books, are often used for this purpose.

Holdaway (1979) asserts that although not every new book introduced must be a Big Book, the objectives of the shared-book-experience cannot be met without daily use of large print books and charts. The main job of the teacher with beginning readers, according to Holdaway, is to be a model for the children and to display literature behavior that is both rewarding and possible for the children to do. When reading to a group, all the children must see the pictures and the print. They must experience their emerging literacy. When they hear the flow of the language, their eyes and brains should see and perceive the print. The spoken and written language must be linked. Clear pointing and masking with very visible text to all the children is the best way to teach (Holdaway, 1979).

In support of these techniques, Cullinan (1986) discusses a

study in Brooklyn, N.Y. which compared a class where the shared-book-experience was used to a more traditional group. The shared-book group was found to have surpassed the control group in areas of book handling, phonics skills and recognition of print. During the reading the teacher invites the children to make predictions about the story and to join in the repetitions of predictable words and phrases.

The Big Books are just one part of a whole language literacy program. Children will work and discover in a classroom where print is used in meaningful ways and abundantly (Cullinan, 1986 and others). Students will write using invented spelling. Recipes can be written down. Drawings can be labeled. Stories will be dictated to the teacher and illustrated by the children.

Sulzby (1985) found that repeated readings of the same stories increased a child's familiarity with the story and enabled the children to engage in re-enactments of the stories by using picture cues to relate the story even though they are not really "reading". Martinez and Teale (1988) found that when Big Books were chosen, children were more likely to engage in this emergent reading behavior. When regular sized books were chosen, the children "studied" silently. The Big Books are chosen more often than regular sized books when placed in the library (Cullinan, 1986). In addition, predictable books are chosen twice as often as non-predictable books (Martinez and Teale, 1988).

Holdaway (1979) advocates a technique to be used when

introducing Big Books that involves placing flaps over some of the words or parts of words. The children can volunteer what is under the flaps. Here a modified CLOZE procedure is being used with young children who must predict what is being covered and visualize the expectant words or letters. He states that the intricacies of phonics are being taught at the critical moment when they are needed, when they are in context and functional. He further states that the dullness of teaching phonics is overcome in this natural way. The predictions are confirmed and more likely to be remembered when the process is rewarding and quick, rather than frustrating. Children are led into, not told, effective reading strategies from the beginning of reading development. With wise guidance from the teacher, the children experience text, hypothesize and test in a supportive and social climate.

Holdaway (1979) discusses the importance of pointing as a crucial strategy during the early reading stages while using Big Books. Children are shown that there is a one-to-one relationship between the spoken and written words. They see that the print moves from left to right. Teachers model this. He further states that it may seem fundamental, but to children who are beginning to read it can be confusing.

Holdaway (1979) notes that one of the reasons children respond so well to Big Books is because much of the print in their natural environment tends to be large, colorful and well designed. Signs, advertisements and television have strong

visual impact. He also notes that the comfort of having a group sitting around a teacher who is reading in this intimate way closely simulates the trusting, secure and expectant environment of the bedtime story situation. There is no criticism, constant correction or competition in the shared-book-experience. It is in our new insights into "natural" learning, he says, where we shifted to whole stories rather than meaningless fragments of word and letter exercises to teach reading. Holdaway's view does leave room for graded, basal readers and other more structured materials when used in a more holistic method. But central to the program is shared reading of whole texts (Holdaway, 1979; Cullinan, 1987).

The shared-book-experience is based on developmental learning as seen in the bedtime story experience. Shared pleasure allows for relaxed interactions between text, child and teacher, as in the home situation. Children then ask for a book to be read repeatedly and also choose the book for their own independent reading time, re-creating the familiar experience time and again with increasing ability. Several copies of the same book should be available (Holdaway, 1979; Cullinan, 1987).

As shown, these shared-book-experiences demonstrate the need for teacher flexibility in planning and also respect for children's ideas and feelings (Holdaway, 1979; Cullinan, 1987). A book about dinosaurs, for example, might lead to drawing dinosaurs, reading more books about dinosaurs and creating puppets to act out the stories in the books.

The heavy use of predictable materials allows the beginning readers to take advantage of extensive experiences with their language and apply it to the reading task. Children are encouraged to use semantic and syntactic cues (Holdaway, 1979). With appropriate teacher support, a graphophonic cueing system can be developed. Through all this, they are successfully reading meaningful texts which impart pleasure and satisfaction. This significantly differs from traditional approaches used for beginning reading in which a child is forced to rely on instant, out of context word recognition without predictable meaning (Holdaway, 1979). Vaughn and Milligan (1986) state that many primary teachers are using this shared-book-experience approach in their primary classrooms.

It is recognized that Big Books may not always be available (Holdaway, 1979; Pickering, 1989). Although time consuming, Big Books can be made by teachers for use in the classroom. Charts can be made. Filmstrips are available for many picture books and children enjoy seeing a favorite story projected so hugely on a classroom wall. Overhead projectors have potential for the masking technique discussed by Holdaway (1979). Children can help make these books. Holdaway (1979) warns however about creating books that defeat the purpose of whole Big Books. The books must be large, sturdy, have large, legible text and relevant pictures.

One teacher of a whole language kindergarten (Martin and Waldon, 1988) read a predictable Big Book Brown Bear, Brown Bear,

What Do You See? (Martin, 1983). After repeated readings the class created their own Big Book story by substituting their own names into the story. The teacher printed their own words onto the tag board pages and the children illustrated. The book was read and placed in the classroom library. The children now viewed themselves as readers, writers and illustrators. Another teacher extended this idea further and had her children make puppets of the characters in favorite stories (Martin and Waldon, 1988). When the children acted out the stories using the puppets, emerging literacy was reinforced (Holdaway, 1979).

TYPES OF LITERATURE:

Based on the previous work of Chomsky and Gamby, Vaughn and Milligan (1986) studied an activity as simple as having children follow along looking at print in a text while listening to a tape of the text. They found this produced significant improvements in reading fluency, comprehension and attitudes towards reading of eight year old remedial readers. They found that the number of listenings needed to achieve fluency depended upon the interest level of the child and predictability of the text.

Teale and Martinez (1988) discuss that all the genres should be included in the literature read in the classroom, to expose children to the limitless variety of characters, settings and information. The predictable picture books should be a staple, but also poetry and expository writing should be included. They point out that there is a huge selection of informational books available which can enhance the values of storybook reading and

increase a child's background of information.

Books that are sequential suit a primary child's elementary understanding of sequence (Lamme, 1987). Story books containing sequences that are familiar are easy for them to understand. Many folktales have sequential plots.

Good children's literature, including many with predictable stories and rhyming patterns, are available in abundance now, many in the form of Big Books. Some publishers are packaging these whole language materials. These publishers include the Wright Group, Developmental Learning Materials, The Rigby Corporation, Richard C. Owen Publishers, Houghton Mifflin and Scholastic (Lamme, 1987 and others). Houghton Mifflin's kit called Beginning to Read, is an example of a packaged basal program which follows many of the principles of whole language instruction. The kit includes a Teachers' Manual, Big Books with corresponding regular size books, audio cassettes, puppets and suggestions for additional books to read along with each unit.

Nancy Larrick (1987) discusses the beauty of poetry and reinforces the whole language idea that varied literature should be available to children. Songs and nursery rhymes have traditionally been enjoyed by adults and children together from infancy. In the classroom, poems and songs are heard and repeated many times. They often rhyme and have predictable patterns. The poem can be put on a chart and the words pointed to as it is recited.

Besides rhythm and rhyme, discussing the meaning of a poem

can help children learn to read between the lines. Lamme (1987) suggests, for example, bringing in a piece of a weeping willow tree to see how well this suggests the configuration of the tree. Poetic terms can be noted.

The rhythmic aspect of poems leads to repetition by children. They will learn to repeat phrases with different words not normally thought of as words to teach beginning readers. Children who have heard poetry and song from an early age come to kindergarten with large vocabularies (Larrick, 1987).

Lamme (1987) also suggests creating a file of poems on different subjects so they are always at the teacher's and children's fingertips. Children might want to make their own books of favorite poems or they might want to tape record them.

INTERACTING WITH BOOKS:

It has been known for a long time by parents and teachers about the different ways that children interact with books, but now researchers can support this wisdom and encourage teachers who still rely on worksheets as a way of teaching reading to use methods that are more suited to encourage emergent literacy (Martinez and Teale, 1988; Glazer, 1986). Teale and Martinez (1988) have found that repeated readings, at least three times, makes it more likely that children will re-enact a book on their own.

Researchers have also found that children should be given "assignments" or specific activities that they might enjoy doing in the classroom library that will encourage emergent literacy

behaviors (Teale and Martinez, 1988). As an example, children could be asked to read a familiar story to a friend or act out the story on a flannel board with one another. Children also often enjoy playing "teacher" and "reading" the story to a small group.

Teale and Martinez (1988), in reviewing literature on how to read to children found that most educators agreed on certain points to be considered when reading to children: "choose books carefully, prepare by previewing the book, provide the appropriate physical setting, provide a brief introduction, read with expresion, encourage children's responses to the book and allow time for discussion after reading." (p.11)

Positive effects are achieved not merely from the words read but also from the interaction of the teacher and children during reading. It is important to have discussions about books read and to explore ways that the story relates to their own lives.

Book discussions held after a read aloud session or a silent reading time can take place in many different ways. Teachers should ask many types of questions and should encourage children to share what they have read. Some teachers allow children to take home a book from the classroom library to read at home. The next day the child discusses what was read and who might have read it to him/her. This also encouraages parents to interact with reading to children at home (Lamme, 1987).

The classroom library should be a focal point in the room. Classrooms with well designed libraries result in free choice of

books and reading activities (Teale and Martinez, 1988; Martinez and Teale, 1988). The library should be a collection of trade books that are easily accessible to the children. It should be in a quiet corner that is partially partitioned from the rest of the room. It should be large enough to accomodate several children at a time. It should be comfortable, with carpet, pillows and chairs to both sit and recline (Martinez and Teale, 1988). The shelves should be open faced so that a variety of books can be displayed. Posters, bulletin boards, etc., which feature literature-oriented displays should be colorful and changed periodically. Flannel boards and tapes related to the books help extend the children's emergent reading behaviors (Teale and Martinez, 1988; Cullinan, 1987).

As mentioned earlier, the books read during group story time by the teacher should always be placed in the library as these are chosen most readily by the children for their own reading (Teale and Martinez, 1988; Martinez and Teale, 1988). Several copies of favorite books should be included as well (Cullinan, 1987). Careful planning of the library and storybook time will maximize the likelihood that children will interact with books in the library (Teale and Martinez, 1988; Anderson, Hieber, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985).

Teale and Martinez (1988) point out that recent empirical research shows that the best predictor and causal factor in a child's growth as a reader is the amount of leisure time spent reading and interacting with books. So, even if a child is

unable to read, establishing correct reading behavior in kindergarten is a desirable goal. The classroom library should include a rich selection of books for the children to choose from and include fables, fairy tales, poetry, stories and informational books, including concept books.

A widely used practice in many classrooms and schools is Sustained Silent Reading or SSR (Cambourne, 1988; Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986; Lamme, 1987). All the children and the teacher read for a set period of time each day. In this way the teacher is an excellent role model and the importance of reading is reinforced. Cambourne (1988) suggests that in kindergarten ten minutes is an appropriate time for this activity. Learners are free to select, read or peruse any text that is available in the room. Cambourne also suggests the following ground rules be observed for SSR: 1) Everyone must select a book, sit quietly somewhere in the room and interact with a book. 2) It is quiet time. No talking or sharing is allowed at this time. 3) Books cannot be changed until a set time has passed, so books must be chosen carefully. 4) Readers should think about what they might share later about the book as they read. 5) Teachers, or any other person in the room, must also be reading. Cambourne (1988) further states that teachers should realize that there are different ways to interact with a book. Even non-readers will turn pages, enjoy pictures, re-create text from pictures or pretend to read by running a finger over the text. Young children will often interact and collaborate with another child

or adult while "reading." Martinez and Teale (1988) found that children prefer familiar, predictable books. Examples of this type of book that are often mentioned in the literature are The Three Billy Goats Gruff and The Gingerbread Boy by Galdone. Holdaway (1979) also strongly suggests Bill Martin's Instant Readers. The natural entry to teaching word recognition can be found in sequences like: "Run, run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the Gingerbread man!" It is psycholinguistically the best way to teach word recognition (Holdaway, 1979). Unlike word by word reading, it has the fluency of real language (Holdaway, 1979; Lamme, 1987). This helps the children learn from the teacher modeling and their own involvement without a sense of competition or pressure. The children do, however, need experience with a wide variety of books. But the predictability aids in children's recreation of the books independently (Teale and Martinez, 1988).

As mentioned above, whole language programs help children gain mastery of skills when the need arises (Lamme, 1990; Holdaway, 1979). The skills are taught and learned through the reading and writing that occurs in the room. Drills and dittos are discouraged. Skills are taught through written language being used in purposeful ways. Many other features of books should be considered besides their obvious predictability. These are rhythm, rhyme, familiar cultural sequences and the inevitability of events in the story. But also the interests of the children must not be forgotten.

Many kindergarten teachers who follow the whole language concepts believe that children must immediately view themselves as readers and writers upon coming to school for the first time. On the first day and weeks of school the stage is set for this. Martin and Waldon (1988) review some ways kindergarten teachers do this. One teacher had children make a book containing copies of print from the environment, such as Coca Cola, Burger King and McDonalds's signs. The children take the books home and can "read" the book to family members at home. Both the children and the parents view the children as readers immediately.

Another teacher uses an imaginary activity with her class. The teacher tells the children to close their eyes and see the imaginary pictures behind their eyes. She then writes on a chart what each child sees. Each child's statement is then put on a separate page and illustrated. A copy of each page is made for each child. The pages are put together as books for the children to read and take home. As the beginning days of school progress, children can write address books together and a photo of each child can be placed on the appropriate pages with pictures drawn of their homes (Martin and Waldon, 1988).

LEARNING EXPERIENCE APPROACH:

Experiences with reading and writing have long been a part of some kindergarten classes. The learning experience approach (LEA) as described by Allen and Stauffer has been used as a model by kindergarten teachers in helping them design developmentally appropriate reading and writing experiences for their students.

Children dictate their experiences to the teacher, who writes down the child's words." This demonstrates to the children that their thoughts can be written down and read by themselves and others (McLane and McNamee, 1990).

Strickland and Morrow (1990) point out that some educators have been concerned that the original model of the LEA might make children too dependent upon an adult writing things down for them and thus be afraid to take their own risks. Strickland and Morrow (1990) observed that many teachers have modified their use of the LEA, preferring to focus on individual writing by their students. Teachers still make experience charts with a group, which at the beginning of kindergarten are relatively short but increase in length and complexity as the school year progresses.

Ruth Freeman (1990) describes her successes in implementing a LEA method in whole language early childhood classrooms. She found that the flexibility of the whole language approach enabled her to more readily meet the needs of both the advanced and at risk children. By using their own language to create text there was little difficulty with comprehension and the children could easily make the connection that what they said and wrote was valued.

The daily journal is seen by Strickland and Morrow (1990) as an extension of the LEA for independent learning. It combines group dictation and literacy activity in a relaxed and purposeful way. As described by Strickland and Morrow (1990), there are four steps in the daily journal writing process. These are 1)

experiencing; 2) group journal writing and reading; 3) independent journal writing and reading and 4) sharing. The experiences written about may be those experienced as a group or individually at home or in school. During and after the writing children are encouraged to discuss their ideas and feelings. The teacher writes down what the children say while modeling the writing process by thinking aloud, pausing for children to predict what comes next and revising and editing while children watch. When completed, the children can echo the adult's reading aloud or the adult can track the words with a finger or stick. The children can be asked to find certain repeated words or letters in the chart. These charts are hung in the room for the children to re-read later.

Independently, children are encouraged to draw or write entries into their own journals. This can be done as a group or at interest centers in the room. Children can share their writing by placing their entry in a group book and having this read by other children or hung in the room. Children are encouraged in their independent attempts and are not at all threatened by LEA charts. Their writing is respected, praised and valued by the teacher and classmates. Children are working with a whole text (Dole, 1984; Strickland and Morrow, 1990).

AUTHORSHIP:

An important facet of whole language instruction is authorship (Lamme, 1989). Children learn this concept through reading and re-reading favorite authors and by becoming writers

themselves. In early childhood classrooms the writing of their own Big Books and small versions of the books to take home and read over and over is important (Holdaway, 1979). Often a young child's idea of writing is illustrating (Holdaway, 1979; Lamme, 1989).

Another important teaching strategy for children described by Graves and Hansen (1983) and others also involves children in writing down their experiences and sharing their writing with others. By becoming authors of books by writing down what they know and then "publishing" their home-made books they become authors. A special chair in the room is designated as the "author's chair." In this chair children read their writing aloud and are then questioned by their classmates and helped to edit their work (Lamme, 1989; Calkins, 1986). Crowell, Kawakami and Wong (1986) discuss the interaction that went on in one kindergarten classroom during writing time. The children helped each other to figure out how to spell the words. The teacher helped the children discover a strategy for continuing to write when an adult's assistance was not there. The teacher's observations and interactions with the children gave the teacher insights into the language development of each child. This knowledge enabled her to change the environment to suit the children's needs, if necessary. Sharing of one's work with classmates gives value and purpose to a child's efforts (Lamme, 1989; Crowell, Kawakami & Wong, 1986).

Children's work should be displayed and shared with respect

and at eye level. Changes in work displayed should be made regularly. Displays should be colorful and attractive. Inexpensive newsprint should be used for first drafts only. If a child cannot yet write, he can draw a picture and tell the story to the classmates. The teacher can initiate discussion and sharing of ideas. This can be extended by having children discuss favorite authors' books as well.

IMPORTANCE OF BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS:

Lamme (1989; 1987) discussess the importance that illustrations serve in young children's selecting of books for themselves to read. Children can learn to appreciate favorite illustrators and understand how books are made by creating books themselves. Many copies of books by one illustrator can be brought into the classroom. These books are read aloud for several weeks and enjoyed in the library. Children can create their own illustrations by using the particular illustrator's works as a model. One popular author and illustrator is Eric Carle. Children can create collage illustrations using techniques similar to those used by the author/illustrator in such books as The Very Hungry Caterpillar and The Very Busy Spider. As an extension on this activity, the children can write to the illustrator and give their feelings about the artist's work. The letters are mailed and the children can receive wonderful letters from book illustrators. The teacher can bind the responses into a book which becomes a part of the library. Huck and Kerstetter (1987) tell of the excitement of

having a book author/illustrator visit a school. This provides role models for children and in turn makes them aspiring author's and illustrators. They have been shown the value of printed materials as it relates to themselves and they know they can do it too. Various art media can be explored such as origami as in The Paper Crane by Molly Bang. Simple crayons are used in many books by illustrators such as Mary Winslow Parker and others. The ideas are extensive in this area.

Bruce McMillan and Tana Hoban are examples of photographers who illustrate brilliantly colored picture books. This writer observed an experience some children had in a classroom. Two children co-authored a book about sport's techniques. The authors took photographs of each other to illustrate the techniques they wrote about. The teacher helped the children to bind the book. It was a huge success and other classmates enjoyed reading it. These children experienced the pleasures of writing, illustrating, publishing and sharing their work, just as a professional would.

THE READING/WRITING CONNECTION:

Lucy Calkins (1986; 1991) points out that recently educators have been increasingly interested in the teaching of writing. In-service writing courses, workshops and summer institutes have been well attended by teachers. She further states that recently there has been a great deal of research on the teaching of writing and that teachers are turning this research into practice. Teachers are being taught about the processes involved

in writing. They understand that children need large blocks of time to write. Teachers and children must listen to each other and improve on their original texts. Writing must take place each day.

Historically, writing was rarely taught (Calkins, 1986). Students handed in final products, but the process of getting there was neglected by teachers. Unskilled writers are so concerned with spelling errors and grammar that they continually interrupt themselves and worry about how it is turning out. This destroys a writer's fluency.

Calkins further states that teachers must observe their students as writers and see how they work in order to help them. Secondly, she and other researchers have studied how professional writers reach their final products. By understanding the writing process, teachers can help their students. Calkins says teachers who understand the writing process are removing the risk factor for children by not placing so many rules on their initial writing attempts. This includes not insisting on writing perfectly formed letters and using correct syntax and spelling at the beginning.

Calkins reminds teachers that writing development is part of language development, and just as adults do not correct the way an infant tries to say its first words, teachers should not correct first attempts at writing.

Lucy Calkins teaches teachers to have children "write" on the very first day of school. Children are given paper and pens

and pencils. Many draw pictures. She states that most children come to kindergarten knowing at least a handful of the names and shapes of some letters. Some might know a few letter-sound relationships. For the children who do not, it is even more important for them to be immersed in a literature-rich environment, since they more than likely are from homes where books and literature are scarce.

By asking children to try to write and read what they have written, the teacher will see if a child has the concept of letter-sound correspondence. If the child looks at the paper and "reads" what has been written, it is likely that the child understands the concept. But if a child makes marks on the paper and then looks in the sky to "read," then this child needs help in learning this concept. The child should be helped to draw attention to the letters and told, "Let's read it." Teachers should respond positively to these early attempts at a child's reading of his own writing. In classrooms throughout the country, teachers are learning to respond to children's early writing attempts in the same ways parents respond to a baby's early speech.

In the writer's workshop, teachers are taught that if kindergarten children are provided with many opportunities to write and if they are in classrooms rich with literature, they quickly learn.

The teacher's role here is to provide access to materials and time to write (McLane and McNamee, 1990). There should be

much structure for all of the writing - talking - reading - listening and extending on what children do and say. Teachers should provide a note pad next to the play telephone for children to write messages. Envelopes and paper are next to the classroom mailbox. Teale and Martinez (1987) describe kindergarten classrooms where a postal/pen pal program was implemented. This provided real world, functional writing tasks for the children. In the housekeeping corner children can write shopping lists. They can read aloud to the baby dolls. Children can write directions and make road signs in the block corner. Children can vote for decisions needed in the classroom by writing ballots. Children can sign their names every morning on the attendance sheet.

Daily writing is an important part of a whole language reading program (Lamme, 1987). Children should be encouraged to write each day. Even at the beginning of the school year when some children cannot write, they can be encouraged to draw a picture on the journal page for the day (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1986). They should be encouraged to write a few words about the picture if they can, or they can dictate their words to the teacher.

Teachers are learning about invented spelling (Crowell, Kawakami & Wong, 1986). Invented spelling removes obstacles in the path of beginning writers. It gives a child fluency, control and independence when he does not have to ask how to spell a word. Children make the system of spelling their own. For

example, children use the names of letters, not just their sounds to spell (ie: "y" for why and "Q" for thank you, etc.). Consonants are written without vowels ("ovr" for over). This improves without special instruction up to a point. At a later time formal spelling instruction can begin. Observing a child's spelling attempts can give a teacher clues as to what children do know about written language. Again, teachers are "kid watchers" (Sowers, 1988; Crowell, Kawakami & Wong, 1986).

In order to encourage writing one teacher asks children to write the letters they think belong in a word (Martin and Waldon, 1988). She does this by encouraging them to take risks and write what they think. Sometimes dashes are put on the paper to indicate letters missing.

Martinez and Teale (1987) describe the Kindergarten Emergent Literacy Program in three schools in southern Texas. Classrooms are organized for a rich language setting. Print in the environment is abundant. Children are told on the first day of school that they will visit the writing center each day. They are told they can write on assigned topics or on a topic of their own choosing. The writing center is introduced in a structured way. The teacher writes on the board and asks if the children can read it. When they say they cannot, she reads it, and this demonstrate that it is real writing, even though they can't read it. Then she tells children they will also be writers. Even though not everyone can read what others write, they will be able to read their own writing to others. The teacher models some more

and shows examples of five and six year old children's writing. The examples are scribbles, drawings, random spellings and invented spelling. Children are further told that they can write in their own way and that it does not have to be like grown-up writing. Unlined paper is provided. This enables the children to be freer to write in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Later in the year other paper can be introduced. Children should be given functional writing tasks such as invitations to a class Thanksgiving feast, etc. Creative dramatics, cooking and other hands-on experiences will encourage more sophisticated writing strategies. Topics on personal experiences generate longer and better formed stories.

In the writing center, the teacher has the greatest impact. She/he facilitates and invites discussion of topics before beginning to write. She elicits ideas to help children develop a topic. Children are encouraged to think before they write (Martinez and Teale, 1987). Students draw upon what they know and read as a source of knowledge when they write (Cullinan, 1987).

Children should always read what they write on the day it is written. They should be asked to read, not tell, what they write. Teachers should give feedback on content and form. For example, a teacher could say, "You have a problem and a solution in your story." The children are also facilitators of each other's work, as stated earlier.

Evaluation of children's progress:

How can a teacher evaluate and keep track of achievement in a whole language classroom? Traditional standardized testing with graded skill levels cannot be readily applied. Reading levels assume that various forms of language contain separate areas of knowledge. This is contradictory to whole language concepts. Cambourne (1988) suggests collecting two types of data on children. These are data that will show learners attitudes towards reading and writing. Ideally the teacher wants to produce learners who use reading and writing outside the classroom and feel positive about themselves as readers and writers. The data also enables the teacher to draw conclusions about the child's control of effective language uses in reading, writing and orally. This is because effective use of language depends on knowing about and doing things with language, and using text effectively. Teachers collect this data in two ways: by observing children's use of language in different situations and by systematically collecting and saving children's efforts.

Cambourne further suggests that to collect the data the teacher should use a sturdy notebook with three to five blank pages assigned to each child. This book is carried constantly and observations are recorded throughout the day during busy language sessions. Notes can be made during SSR, sharing time, etc. Overt forms of language behavior are recorded. These are variable depending upon local standards and goals the teacher has for the children. Cambourne devised the following list of

linguistic knowledge, skills and attitudes which he considers important:

- "1) Sense of audience when communicating,
- 2) control of conventions appropriate to language context,
- 3) ability to use a range of registers and genres,
- 4) vocabulary acquisition and use appropriate to context,
- 5) control of grammatical options,
- 6) confidence in using language in different contexts,
- 7) comprehension of what's being heard or read,
- 8) listening attentively." (p. 125)

Items 1-6 are productive language skills and items 7 and 8 are receptive language skills.

How can a teacher recognize these characteristics or their absence? Cambourne then continues by listing the various markers which are indicative of consistent, inconsistent or absence of control of the language. Readers are referred to pages 125 to 128 in Cambourne (1988) for a detailed explanation of the markers he discusses.

A concept in whole language, that of the learner taking an active part in what is learned, can be used here by having the child record some data. As children become more able writers they can record each book read and whether or not he/she liked it (Holdaway, 1979).

Once data is collected, the teacher must synthesize the results and form an evaluation (Cambourne, 1988; Lamme, 1987). Cambourne suggests making a checklist similar to the one

suggested by Lamme (see pages 86-87 in Cambourne, 1988). The checklist is completed after studying the data collected in the notebook. Then he suggests stapling the checklist into the child's section of the observation book. Cambourne emphasizes, however, that teachers must make their own checklist and re-work it from time to time as needed. Consistent with whole language philosophy, the teacher is flexible and responsible for learning new things from each child each day. Each teacher's evaluation will differ based on his/her background and knowledge. There are no "rules" in whole language that suit everybody and every situation, he says.

One can see that without unit tests from basal readers and a series of graded worksheets teachers must change methods of evaluating progress. Lamme (1987) says that most whole language teachers keep a file of the children's work. Records are included on what books the child has read. Children can write a brief note about a book with their reaction to it. Lamme also suggests teachers make a checklist of the following behaviors that the teacher should monitor:

"Shows interest in words

Can tell a familiar story

Can make up a story

Can point to individual words on a page

Can turn the pages at an appropriate time when a story

is being read aloud

Can find a familiar book on a bookshelf

Chooses to read or look at books during free time
Notices words and symbols in the environment
Spells words developmentally
Chooses to write during free time
Asks questions about print
Paces dictation so someone can write down what he is saying
Is aware that print has meaning
Remembers details from stories
Predicts outcomes in stories
Compares books, authors and illustrators
Has favorite books
Borrows books from the library
Rereads favorite books
Stops reading books he or she does not like after looking at
a few pages
Uses books as resources for projects
Brings to school books on a topic being studied
Comments about books read." (p. 51).

There are several standardized book awareness measures such as the Concepts about Print Test, which can be found in Marie Clay's (1985) The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties, third edition, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Holdaway (1979) suggests keeping dated examples of creative writing and copying behavior in a file. He also suggests a type of informal reading inventory can be given by having a child read to the teacher from a graded text as the teacher notes miscues on

a photocopy of the page the child is reading. The records are kept in the child's file. By evaluating the records over several months it is possible to see with some accuracy how a child is progressing and where there might be some need for additional help.

Cambourne (1988) also suggests keeping representative pieces of the child's work, as above. Also suggested is recording miscues on an oral reading piece from time to time. Kramer (1990) suggests collecting reading and writing samples in September, January and May of the school year. Pils (1991) and others also advocate the use of portfolios and collecting writing samples.

In the past, one teacher, Linda Pils (1991), states she relied on basal tests to assess her students' growth in reading in her first grade class. Now that she has made the transition to whole language, she now analyzes children's work. This gives her an idea as to how they are progressing in reading/writing skills. She uses a variation on Cambourne's (1988) suggestion for a record book. She walks around with a clipboard of blank mailing labels. On these she jots notes. At the end of each day she places these on the child's page of her notebook. The observations on a daily basis give her a clear picture of the progresss the children are making. She also keeps a literary portfolio for each child which includes dated writing samples to analyze for sentence structure, left-to-right concepts, content, etc. Later in the year she has each child read a selection from

an appropriate book and calculates the number of words read per minute. This is done periodically. Similarly, a ten minute writing sample is kept as well. A list of books enjoyed and read is kept here also. The list is a starting point at conferences with children, in which she discusses with the children about their interests, how books and themes are alike or different and what they would like to write about. A checklist is kept on skills and the children help to complete it so the children can share responsibility for their learning. Evaluations are done daily, rather than sporadically, so problems can be tackled immediately. Their reading and writing is evaluation as well as learning. This can be modified for use in kindergarten.

Summary:

Linda Lamme and Pam Lee (1990) point out in their article in Childhood Education that there were several factors which influenced the entire kindergarten in Pam Lee's school to become whole language classrooms. Teachers were empowered to try new things. Sometimes it was boredom with traditional methods which caused teachers to explore new ways to teach. The enthusiasm of one teacher, who became a leader, spread to the other teachers. College and inservice courses encouraged teachers to read more professional literature and try new things. The teachers collaborated in their planning. The school administrators allowed the teachers some flexibility to change their programs.

They encouraged and supported the teachers' efforts and supported them in their communications with parents. The teachers allowed the children to teach them by becoming "kid watchers." Finally, the teachers constantly evaluated their programs and made changes when necessary. Lamme and Lee point out that teachers who are leading the changes in classrooms today are never finished with their work, as they must always make changes, updating their programs and moving ahead with new research and materials.

As with any trend in education, there will always be differences of opinion and new methods to study. Opinions of some experts in the field of reading concerning the needs for additional research will be discussed in the next chapter. Just by the nature of whole language instruction, traditional methods for evaluating students' progress in reading need to be examined. The debate between whole language proponents and basal reader supporters will be summarized as it applies to reading instruction in kindergarten.

Annotated References

Holdaway, D. (1979). The Foundations of Literacy. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

This book, intended for teachers, discusses beginning literacy and examines questions and solutions concerning literacy theories and practices. Chapter one explores some assumptions about literacy and characteristics of a model for language learning. Chapter two presents historical viewpoints and current practices. Chapter three discusses literacy learning before school and chapter four describes the shared-book-experience. Chapter five discusses the developmental model of language learning. Chapter six deals with teaching basic strategies to children. Chapter seven deals with integrating all language learning and chapter eight deals with creativity in these endeavors. Chapter nine examines developmental learning and diagnosis. Chapter ten concludes with a discussion of the relationships between teachers, public schools and attitudes of society. Suggestions for teaching, drawn from research and teaching done in New Zealand, proliferate the text.

Teale, W.H. and Martinez, M.G. (1988). Getting on the right road to reading: Bringing books and young children together in the classroom. Young Children. 41, 568-573.

This article discusses a successful approach for promoting interactions with books and encouraging voluntary literary habits in early childhood classrooms. It involves daily reading aloud

of storybooks by the teacher, a classroom library, availability of a wide selection of trade books, and activities that encourage emergent reading behavior.

Vaughn, S.C. and Milligan, J.L. (1986). If They Learn to Read by Reading, How Do We Get Them Started? Paper presented at the Annual Transmountain Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, May 29-31, 1986. Vancouver, British Columbia. ERIC, ED 301 868.

Psycholinguistic theory provides the basic structure for the idea that talking books, taped books, shared-book-experiences and writing activities that involve real texts with purpose are the best ways to encourage beginning readers. Vaughn and Milligan discuss certain criteria that they believe underlie the learning to read process. These are that children learn to read by making attempts to understand whole texts that are meaningful to themselves; children learn to read by reading often; the process must be enjoyable; children should read text a bit beyond their capacity in order to improve reading ability; even non-readers can understand most text if they are given sufficient background information and; that reading and writing are reciprocal processes.

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CHAPTER THREE: Needs Assessment and New Directions

Introduction:

As has been shown, the whole language approach to reading instruction as it applies to kindergarten children and early childhood education in general, is a very dynamic area in education today. The wider acceptance of whole language principles and practices raises many questions for teachers, administrators, parents and researchers. As can be seen in reviewing the history of the methods used to teach reading in the past, trends come and go, debate continues as to which are the best methods, and cycles emerge.

Research Needs:

Pickering (1989) states that research on whole language, per se, is limited partly because the term whole language is relatively new and the wide acceptance of it as a viable teaching philosophy has also only recently gained wider acceptance.

He further states that because of these limitations on research on whole language, additional research questions still need to be answered relating to the effectiveness of whole language and holistic language instruction in increasing literacy achievement in children.

Also, he states, the methodology associated with whole language must be more clearly defined, giving options to teachers to adapt instruction to suit the individual students' needs. The

effectiveness of the methodology must be studied and tested.

Cooter and Flynt (1989) state that while the whole language approach has been discussed for many years, there is little research that observes and documents its use in the classroom. Kenneth Goodman (1989a) feels it would be interesting to see how pupil and teacher roles change as classrooms change from basal to whole language instruction. He further states that studies which show pupil successes would also be valuable. Research can help teachers learn about innovative ways to use their time, space, materials and social interactions and how these factors facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom. Again, he says, practice is leading research in this area.

Zarillo (1989) says that researchers can help teachers by investigating specific teaching techniques to be used in whole language programs. Teachers need help in implementing a whole language program, evaluation of the reading progress of students, and design of their programs that account for meeting the needs of individual learners.

Researchers have the opportunity to do research in authentic classrooms with teachers who ascribe to holistic teaching methods and learning settings (Goodman, K., 1989a). Goodman states that whole language teachers are eager for the support of researchers who can demonstrate the relevance of their work.

Kenneth Goodman (1989a) also says much of the research on whether or not whole language "works" is based on trial and error methods. Since whole language has a research base in

multidisciplinary theories, new research must examine the extent to which whole language practice is consistent with its scientific base. Research should study what happens to learners and teachers when a whole language philosophy is implemented. Also, he says, whole language classrooms provide authentic settings for studying some basic research concerns, such as how cognitive and language processes develop. Research in whole language classrooms can test the theoretical base of whole language and contribute to further developments in the field.

Goodman continues that comparisons between whole language classrooms and skills-based classrooms cannot be evaluated by using skills-based standardized tests, because this reduces whole language to skills, which is not consistent to whole language learning.

Strickland (Aaron et al 1990b) says that she likes the teacher as researcher model. She wants to see more questioning of teachers and listening to what they have to say about whole language. The information gathered from teachers should be synthesized into research evaluations.

Kenneth Goodman (1989a) also sees that academicians are finding that they have much to learn from practitioners. He says that as teachers are becoming empowered, the communication between researchers, theorists and teachers is no longer one way.

When administrators ask whole language teachers for the proof that whole language works, teachers can say that the proof is in their classrooms and their students (Goodman, K., 1989a).

Goodman states however that there is much to learn through observation in whole language classrooms. Teachers can learn about how the processes in whole language classes work and teachers can expand on this information.

Teachers need to see more research on transferring the theories into practice. Some teachers have been doing this already as practice is ahead of research. Researchers need to support teachers who teach without basals since schools spend ten times more on basals than they do on trade books (Goodman, K., 1989a). Goodman states (1989a) that the more research shows readers can succeed without basals, "the less irrational will be the enforced dependence on basals in our schools." (p. 216).

Research in the classrooms might require changes in the view of the usual research roles (Goodman, K., 1989a). Teachers and children in whole language rooms will be involved in a wide variety of activities, locations and ways of interacting with one another. This will make definite structure of roles difficult, as there is constant change going on in the whole language classroom. Goodman (1989a) also says that unlike other research, the researcher will not be able to come into a room, administer a few tests to collect data, and then leave. He says it might be necessary for the researcher to stay longer and participate in order to be able to study what happens in whole language classrooms without restricting or changing its nature or isolating features from their natural contexts.

Yetta Goodman (1990) also believes that classroom research

is needed and that teachers and researchers must work together. She says that research in social settings, such as classrooms, has not been considered seriously. She continues by saying that the future of literacy research will be in the classroom using legitimized structures to observe classroom activities and interactions. This is where learning occurs and where it should be studied. Through classroom research, the role of the teachers, children of differing abilities, uses of different types of instructional materials and use of oral language can be explored in greater depth over long periods of time. Yetta Goodman further states that the research into what young children know about literacy must continue. Also, she says, studying children in many different cultures who speak many different languages will lead to knowledge of the universal ways in which children learn literacy.

Aaron (Aaron et al, 1990b) says we must be more critical of all the research that is published. He says there are a lot of reports that are based on inadequate research, sometimes based on samples that are too small or generalities made that were based on research done only on a particular group.

Strickland, Chall and Goodman (Aaron et al, 1990b) also say that educators must be careful about the interpretation of published research. They agree that sometimes it is boiled down to simplistic terms and interpretations that do not look at all like the original research.

Strickland also states here that educators and teachers must

take more critical looks at the original research, along with the critical reviews published on the findings. She says this must be done at the university level as well.

Durkin (Aaron et al, 1990a) states that we have moved away from the separation between reading and writing. However, she states that it is not proven that there really is a close connection between reading and writing. She says that since all children learn in different ways, we cannot assume that writing should always be taught early on. She says eclecticism is what teachers should work towards.

Further, Durkin states, there are many unanswered questions concerning the connection between reading and writing and about the effects of early writing and invented spelling on the future success of writing in a more acceptable way.

McLane and McNamee (1990) state that writing has been a very neglected part of literacy research. There has been much less research done on writing in early childhood than on reading. They say most primary teachers give more instructional time to reading than to writing, and that writing is often just worksheets, handwriting exercises and spelling. Indeed, it is now known that a child's early scribbles can be attributed to early writing attempts.

Forrester (1977) points out it has proven most difficult to systematically document a child's natural literacy learning development because it is impossible to know which children will learn to read and write before going to school. No agency has

granted the funds necessary for describing the first three to five years of a child's experiences with language on the chance that that child will become a reader and writer during his/her preschool years. As a result, there are no systematic research descriptions of how natural literacy occurs.

It can be inferred from research such as Durkin's (1966) that children who read early are not actually taught but learn by being exposed to an environment containing much stimulation and literary material. There have been studies done on individual children, such as the case study done by Glenda Bissex (1980), as she documented her own child's discoveries about print before school age until age ten. But most of what we know is derived from parent accounts of what was happening in their homes after the fact of a child's precocious reading ability was discovered.

McLane and McNamee (1990) point out that as yet there are no definitive answers as to the relationship between early experience with literacy and later, long-term literacy development. As with other aspects of psychological development, we assume there is a relationship between early literacy experiences and later mature literacy. Of course, how the relationship shows itself will depend upon how several factors interact in complex ways. These factors include a child's interests, temperament and personality, as well as the kind and quality of instruction necessary in school and encounters with literacy at home.

Yetta Goodman (1990) discusses how children are actively

involved in their literacy learning. Research in the past twenty years has shown that they learn through daily activities and interactions with their particular social, cultural, religious, economic, linguistic and literature of society. This will have continued profound impact on education all over the world.

Researchers are continuing to add to the knowledge explosion taking place in the field of literacy development. This has had, and will continue to have, effects on authors, publishers and editors of instructional material for children, curriculum developers, test producers and researchers. Goodman continues that these groups must begin to reflect in their work the important knowledge that has been gained through research into literacy development.

Pickering (1989) says educators should continue to examine the methodology used to apply whole language. He predicts that on the basis of research that will be done on classroom applications, teachers will increase the use of literature in the classroom, not only for language acquisition, but in the content areas as well. There will be more writing done in school from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Teachers will make wider use of varied materials for reading and language arts, such as newspapers and other periodicals, anthologies of student writing, almanacs and other informational publications, rather than confining themselves to a limited number of texts.

Challenges to literacy education in the next 10-20 years:

Strickland (Aaron et al, 1990b) sees the greatest challenge to literacy education in the future to be in meeting the needs of what she calls the "underclass," a new term for the poor, who used to be called culturally deprived or inner city children. She feels that recently educators have been moving further away from mainstream children and their achievements. She sees a resurgence of interest in this group and much dialogue on how to teach these children. She says more research needs to be done in order to adequately help this group.

Durkin (Aaron et al, 1990b) sees that those we call underclass or poor are going to be the majority in classrooms in years to come. Teachers have control over what goes on in the classroom, not what is outside, and she encourages teachers to do the best they can with that which they do have control.

Chall (Aaron et al, 1990b) agrees on the future teaching of the underclass. Chall says that her research reveals that poor children do not have as many books as middle class children, and this is a major reason for reading failure in this group. However, she states that the low income children who do well are in classrooms whose teachers provide a lot of books and teach content area reading. Chall continues by saying that teachers need to be taught more about how best to teach reading to these children.

Aaron (Aaron et al, 1990b) points out that teachers must be more prepared to teach the increasing number of children where

English is their second language, especially in some larger cities.

Needs for teacher education:

Pickering (1989) states that teachers beliefs about the application of whole language methods will be a major factor in determining the future of whole language learning. Pickering cites studies by Richards, Gipe and Thompson (1987) that found that for primary teachers, years of teaching experience and the completion of graduate level courses were associated with their positive feelings about whole language teaching. As teachers increased their knowledge about reading instruction and gained more experience, they became more open to more holistic instruction.

Gutnecht (1989) suggests that those who develop teacher preparation programs should consider combining reading methods courses and children's literature courses so that teachers in training can see and feel the strength of a literature based, whole language approach.

Kenneth Goodman (1989a) states that in view of the fact that preservice and staff development programs have been developed, the effects of these programs must be carefully researched as they are implemented in North America. He says that the programs already in place in New Zealand and Australia for dissemination of whole language philosophy and practice can be used as models.

Strickland (Aaron et al, 1990b) sees the need for long-term,

ongoing education for teachers. It should not be assumed that once teachers graduate they no longer have a need for more education. She also questions the quality of some pre-service education. Chall adds that teachers need to learn more about teaching reading. Aaron also believes that more attention needs to be paid to working with the classroom teacher by those educators on the university level, rather than only turning out articles for tenure committees. Hodges (1988) also agrees with the need for continued staff development, especially in methods of observing children in the classroom and knowledge of the reading and writing processes.

Resource materials:

Besides setting aside basals and using authentic children's literature, other materials are needed by teachers in whole language classrooms. Kenneth Goodman (1989) says that although publishers are providing Big Books and are publishing more literature for children, some of the packaged "whole language" materials have little to do with whole language. He says that the development of resource materials will be very dynamic in the next decade. He further says that although good whole language teachers are able to put together their own real materials that suit the needs of individual learners, they also see the need for availability of resources that do not exist, such as content area materials to suit pupils of various ages, abilities and language backgrounds.

He also sees research on materials that support whole language as another area of need. Research could document the innovative use of materials and provide guidelines for teachers and administrators to select whole language materials from available sources and provide information for development of new, unconventional resources. Teachers and administrators need research help to establish the criteria for evaluation of these materials.

Goodman also criticizes administrators who mandate that teachers use inappropriate materials and books, such as basals.

Administrative support:

Zarillo (1989) states that successful literature based reading programs most often have had administrators that allowed teachers to work together in designing curriculum and activities suitable for their philosophy on whole language instruction.

Lamme and Lee (1990) point out that in Lee's school administrators allowed teachers the flexibility to try new things. The principal encouraged the teachers' efforts.

Goodman, in Aaron et al (1990a), states that at the university level students are taught about the latest trends in research and methodology. However they often are discouraged by administrative mandates that restrict their control over their own teaching. Kenneth Goodman (1989) also says that whole language teachers often find themselves limited by these unsympathetic administrators, restrictive and inflexible policies

on reading education, and use of mandated and inappropriate materials. In an article in the journal, Learning, "Taking charge of your own teaching," Kenneth Goodman (1987) asks administrators to recognize that it is the teachers, not the materials, which make the difference in childrens' education. Administrators should support teachers who want to take responsibility for the way literacy is taught to their students.

Parent support:

Ira Aaron (1990b) says teachers will never be able to reach some children without parent support for the reading programs in the schools. Lamme and Lee (1990) found that parents were enthusiastic about the switch to whole language teaching, but were concerned about the learning of specific reading skills. Holdaway (1979) points out that parents need some education on their child's literacy learning. They need to understand the methodology used in the school to teach their children to read. Graves and Senecal (1989) have developed a guide for parents called Let's Celebrate Whole Language (A Practical Guide for Parents). It is designed to let parents know what the whole language approach is, how it is being used in the classroom, and how parents can apply whole language at home. Lehnert (1981) and others agree that immersion in language seems to be an important factor in reading success. She states however that this extends beyond the classroom to include the home.

Pills (1991) also points out the need for parent support and

participation. In the fall of the school year she speaks to each parent and points out the kind of growth to be expected by their children and what stages they would progress through in their literacy development. Parents are shown their child's journal and listen to a tape made of the child's reading. Through speaking with the parents, Pils learns about the child's interests and hobbies from a completed parent survey. The teacher should keep the discussion on a positive note by elaborating on what the child could do, not what the child could not do.

Social and political factors:

Pickering (1989) feels that social and political climates will influence the impact of whole language teaching. He points out that the large number of school districts that rely on skills testing that requires mastery of sequential skill levels will be a major drawback to acceptance of a whole language centered philosophy of literacy education. Many school districts remain committed to test-driven curriculum development. Aaron (1990b) also states that getting communities to support the schools will continue to be a major problem in the next decade. Holdaway (1979) refers to people who leave school and are no longer readers. Their bad experiences with reading in school carry over into adulthood, causing lack of support for their children's schools.

Evaluation and assessment:

According to Pikulski (1989), reading assessment is going through a period of transition now. Most in the field of reading agree that there is much change needed in this area. The way reading assessment is conceptualized, the way in which tests are constructed, administered, and interpreted, all need to be re-evaluated. Pikulski continues that there has been much over dependence on formal, published tests with narrow reliability, objectivity and validity. Some progress is being made here, but slowly, as there is new interest on old ideas of collecting observational data and informally based approaches of reading assessment.

According to Pikulski, tests and assessment procedures must be chosen based on the purposes for which they are intended to be used. Currently, most test scores are interpreted as precise and objective. But he feels the tests should reveal more subjective information.

Also, much teaching is going on that is test-centered rather than child-centered. Progress is slowly occurring here, but more needs to be done. Much of the testing done in the past until now has centered on testing the mastery of skills that focused on multiple choice measures of word identification, word meaning, and comprehension of small units of prose. This is not representative of the continuous text that students are expected to master and does not suit the constructs of the recent interest in whole language teaching and research on literacy learning and

the reading process (Pikulski, 1989; Valencia and Pearson, 1987). Pikulski (1989) also discusses that a new and dynamic area of assessment, that of the portfolio approach, is being discussed currently as was explained in Chapter II. Kravitz (1991) states that teachers need to be educated on portfolio usage assessment procedures. Since there are no standardized tests associated with this approach, it potentially can place teachers and students, not tests and scores, at the center of the assessment process. As discussed in Chapter II, some whole language teachers are taking samples of students' work over a period of time and evaluating progress this way in a literacy setting as children interact naturally with text. Pikulski states that "while this is not a new idea or a new philosophy, it is a way of thinking that has been eclipsed by narrow psychometric approaches to assessment." (p. 81)

In Aaron et al (1990b), Chall feels we need standards of testing in order to evaluate reading progress and to assess differing teaching practices and their effects on reading. Goodman, in this article, says that one should refer to his Whole Language Evaluation Handbook which helps teachers evaluate more relevant information from these tests than are found in evaluations of standardized tests scores.

Valencia and Pearson (1987) state that one important focus for immediate research is to develop new methods of assessment which are valid to the current theories on the reading process, and which are suitable to wide-scale testing. They believe that

we need a new framework for thinking about assessment which evaluates those aspects of reading which we now know are important.

Hodges (1988), in discussing assessment of early literacy, says that policy makers must be educated about certain issues concerning assessment. Research has shown that there are significant negative effects on uses of standardized, norm-referenced, paper and pencil tests on young children and curriculum in kindergarten. These tests are incompatible with the current best research on early childhood education. The information received from these standardized tests are not very helpful to teachers who must make daily instructional decisions for a classroom full of children. The test scores are often received by the classroom teacher weeks after the test was administered. Hodges continued by saying that individualized, process oriented observation by skilled teachers is the only relevant evaluation procedure because it is relevant to instruction and timely. Most importantly, Hodges states that reading assessment has not kept pace with advances in reading theory, research and practice. Hodges includes a quote from The Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee of the International Reading Association (Joint Statement, 1986): "The pressure to achieve high scores on standardized tests that frequently are not appropriate for the kindergarten child has resulted in changes in content of programs. Program content often does not attend to the child's social, emotional and

intellectual growth and development." (p. 820) Hodges concludes by saying that early literacy evaluation in kindergarten needs to be an ongoing process of observation and analysis of language behavior. Teachers must be good observers and adept at record keeping and analysis. As Yetta Goodman says, teachers must be good "kid watchers."

The 'Debate':

Most recently, polarity exists between proponents of the 'code emphasis' approaches and proponents of the 'meaning emphasis' approach. Each end of the spectrum represents an extreme over-simplification of the complex reading process (Holdaway, 1979). The debate concerning the whole language versus the word centered skills approach is likely to continue for the next decade (Milligan, 1988; Nicholson, 1986). Debate began with the publication of Learning to Read: The Great Debate (Jeanne Chall, 1967). After completing a review of the research on studies of the effectiveness of different reading approaches, she concluded that the most effective approaches to beginning reading are those that focus on decoding words using the alphabetic codes. The views of the whole language proponents as opposed to the views of the word-centered-skills approach advocates are very different and opposing viewpoints. The debate has ignited passionate arguments among some professionals in the field of reading. Hiring of teachers is sometimes determined by which viewpoint the candidate possesses (Milligan, 1988).

Both sides agree that the goal in reading is to have the reader derive meaning from print. The skills approach advocates believe that the best way to achieve this is through teaching children to recognize increasing numbers of words and by giving them the skills necessary to decode the words that are not already in their sight vocabulary. The whole language approach advocates, as has been discussed extensively in this paper, believe effective readers see meaning as they read, rather than words or parts of words. Getting meaning from print does not depend upon exact decoding of each word. Fluency in reading occurs when meaning can be derived from the print, even before a word is decoded, using predictability of the text through schema of the reader. Beginning readers read whole texts from the beginning as they learn to read by reading, and the skills needed will be learned by reading a great deal of literature. Children learn to read by reading from whole to part, just as they learn to speak and listen.

Each side believes in making learning to read easy, but the approaches to this are quite opposite (Nicholson, 1986). Advocates of the skills approaches believe that this involves breaking up words into smaller units by teaching a sequence of skills. Workbooks and dittos are often part of this teaching, in contrast to whole language advocates, who believe that having children engaged in reading from the very beginning is what will make this process easy and meaningful. There is no formal scope and sequence of skills.

The method of word- centered- skills approach teachers is to gradually introduce new words and skills, which is often done through the use of basal reading programs. In contrast, whole language teachers provide background information to the child in order to increase schema needed in preparation for reading a selection.

To further illustrate the issue of the debate, several articles on the issue can be briefly discussed here. Stahl and Miller (1989) did a quantitative research analysis of research on the effects of whole language approaches versus basal reader approaches for beginning reader instruction. Their study showed that whole language approaches appear to be more effective when used in kindergarten for readiness programs. However Schickedanz (1990) criticizes the conclusions of Stahl and Miller's study. Schickedanz says we need more data on the impact of basal versus whole language, especially as it applies to writing.

Stahl (1990) states that each side is viewing the issue as either black or white, never meeting in the center. He feels each approach includes many valid instructional practices. He says it is not clear which approach produces stronger effects overall, but that whole language might be more useful in kindergarten than in the upper grades for developing a child's concepts about print. There are needs for more research. McGee and Lomax (1990), in reviewing the study done by Stahl and Miller (1989), conclude that whole language advocates must become involved in additional research to specify measures of

effectiveness of the approach. They need to find methods of assessment that are consistent with their viewpoints and that can present clear evidence of the value of whole language approaches.

New Zealand has a national policy requiring the whole language approach in all schools. In Australia, it is the norm (Nicholson, 1986). In the English speaking countries, such as Canada and Great Britain, it seems that whole language will become the dominant force in teaching beginning reading. In the United States, the whole language movement appears to be gaining strength. However, the word centered skills approach still is the one chosen by most schools (Milligan, 1988).

Holdaway (1979) asks teachers to consider how the two apparently contradictory processes of teaching reading meet to make-up the whole picture of learning to read. He states that while the debate continues, ordinary children will learn to read and will move from one level of learning to another by combining styles of perception towards a meaningful end through natural processes.

Pickering (1989) says debate will continue concerning the effectiveness of various approaches. But he says new research should answer questions about the effectiveness of these approaches in increasing literacy competence of students at all grade levels.

The combination approach:

Johns (1989) explains that some teachers have found ways to combine the strengths of several approaches to reading. Teachers whose primary goal is to develop literacy among their students do not get caught up in the simplistic black/white of one method over another. There is a middle ground which can be found by teachers who want it. They continue to apply what works, no matter what label experts in the field of reading place on their methods. Heymsfield (1989) argues that both whole language and skill based approaches have strengths, and teachers should use a combined approach. Some teachers have discovered ways to do this before the term whole language came into our jargon.

Only a few studies have been shown to support the combination approach. Eldredge and Butterfield (1987) support teachers who wish to switch from a purely basal approach to the combined approach using basals and whole language together. In one of the few studies done on the combination approach, Cooter and Flynt (1989) studied a group of children in a rural district in Kansas whose teachers manipulated and omitted from the basals, adding appropriate literature and literature based activities as per student needs and interests. The basals were secondary and served as a thematic departure point for the teachers and children. The study suggested that when teachers are free to select their own programs and materials, student performance levels on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills increased significantly. The children were one full book ahead of the basals only classes.

Cooter and Flynt conclude by saying that more research is needed on combination approaches. However, this may be the needed bridge in a teacher's transition from basals only teaching to a more holistic approach. Goodman (1987) encourages teachers who know their students' interests and backgrounds to pick and choose from the more recent basals and to feel confident in their own abilities to know what works for their students. He feels that basals can be a central part of the instruction, but augmented with appropriate trade books. Teachers should also pick and choose from appropriate workbook selections.

Holdaway, being interviewed by Park (1982), states that in New Zealand, experience has been to use natural language, graded basal texts much later in reading development and much less. The teacher uses discretion in selection of pieces from the series, 'often eliminating the unnatural preprimer and primer materials. Holdaway points out that newer basals often contain excerpts or whole texts from real literature. Children can spend a shorter time in the readers and then be directed to the complete texts, using the basal as sort of a pre-reading exercise. He says that in using the basals in this way, the isolated drill exercises are eliminated. Children learn the skills through much reading.

Gutnecht (1990) states that even though basal reader publishers are using more good literature that is written by acclaimed children's authors, the content of these materials needs to be carefully evaluated for the images these books present to children. Although some of the stories are quite

good, he says for some children they remain unbelievable when compared to their own lives. He further states that the basal stories often focus on what the characters say and do, not on what they think and feel. This diminishes development of critical thinking skills in children. In order to understand the text, it must be relevant. To Gutnecht, whole language does not mean totally abandoning all that teachers who use skills approaches have been doing.

The cycle of change:

Some educators feel that the enthusiasm for the whole language approach may have reached its peak and that the movement could fade away as it has several times in the past (Cooter and Flynt, 1989). The reasons for this might include the reluctance of many school administrators and teachers of doing away with basals altogether. Some of these teachers feel they lack the training and experience needed for a purely holistic approach.

Stahl (1990) discusses his view that the whole language movement is "riding the pendulum" and is following the course of many educational fads. Sometimes a program becomes the latest fad and is widely accepted and implemented before adequate research has been done to prove its effectiveness. When it is seen that not all aspects of the fad "work," the program is thrown away only to be replaced by the next new thing.

Stahl offers a solution when he suggests that educators see educational practice as continuous and should try to build on the

knowledge base, rather than to change whole practices every few years.

Discussion:

As has been stated, whole language is a philosophy, not a method. Kenneth Goodman (1989b) however does not believe that the method needs to be "patched" with skills instruction. As Fox (1986) and others state, it is not clear to all teachers of reading which method will be good for all children, and indeed, as this author believes, one method cannot be the best for teaching all children. Some teachers believe that a combination approach would be best. These teachers believe phonics can be taught within the framework of a whole language program by teaching the skills in the context of a meaningful text. All that this author has read suggests that we push away that which is too radical or that which clearly divides one approach from another. We should look and see that there is merit to each of the methods used. We need to take our cues from all the children who have learned to speak their native languages since the beginning of time, and from the successes and failures that have occurred in our classrooms.

This author agrees with Holdaway's view of the use of basal series' in a whole language program. Since the developmental model does not allow for tightly woven sequential programs that are used by teachers as a script, which separate reading instruction from the real uses of literacy, another approach to

the uses of basal series' could be part of instruction.

As Holdaway (1979) and others have found, most newer basals are designed in a more natural style and contain good literature in pleasing formats. Their impact is destroyed, however, if the teacher is not flexible in their use. This author agrees with Holdaway when he says that these basals can fit nicely into a balanced program. A well designed, graded basal can be used to give children choices of selections in which they can read with 95% accuracy. But if a whole group must read the same selections at the same time, the effect is not acceptable.

This author is in agreement with those who believe an eclectic, combined approach to reading instruction in kindergarten is best, as there are successful methods at both ends of the spectrum. But the skills approach can be adapted to fit into a whole language program by presenting material that is always whole and in meaningful context for the children.

It is the opinion of this writer that a more eclectic approach to reading instruction in kindergarten is the best. Some of the newer basal series, such as the Houghton Mifflin Beginning to Read Kit referred to in Chapter II, can be very helpful in planning literature based instruction. The skills lessons included in each unit can serve as examples to the teacher as to what skills might be well taught by the use of the literature included in the unit. Also, an inexperienced teacher, or one who is planning a transition to whole language instruction after having taught through basals exclusively, might find that

the use of a literature based basal series gives the teacher the added security and structure that she/he needs in making the transition. Workbooks and dittos that are not related to the selections being read must be discarded. The literature selections can and should be used to create good pre-reading, guided reading and post-reading exercises which include other related literature selections.

This author found in speaking to several experienced kindergarten teachers whose schools supplied them with the Houghton Mifflin series, that they did not actually depend upon the kits, but they did enjoy using the Big Books and other visual support materials that are included in the program. These teachers continued to create their own thematic units of instruction, sometimes taking an idea from the series and adapting it for their use. However, their colleagues who were less experienced with kindergarten instruction but wanted to teach with the whole language philosophy, found that the series was helpful in planning their instruction, and gave them the security that they were doing the right things for their students. They found that as they gained more confidence in their teaching abilities, they depended less on the teachers' manual.

This writer believes that, although it is difficult, the minds of school administrators and parents must be changed away from the dependence on reading levels and scores on standardized tests. This will require a big effort by whole language

advocates, as dependence on these measures is so entrenched in the minds of many.

Another area of improvement seen by this writer is in the in-service education of teachers on the whole language philosophy and its implications for developmentally appropriate instruction. In speaking to several teachers who took in-service, district wide whole language workshops, very little time was devoted to discussing the research base from which whole language arises. The teachers were taught many wonderful whole language methods, but without the background information to fully understand why these methods would be appropriate. If the teachers fully understand the research from which whole language instruction develops, they would be better able to devise their own methods that are suitable to a more holistic approach. The whole language teacher must have flexibility in teaching and the ability to make constant decisions on instruction as need arises. But without good background information, this will be more difficult and haphazard.

Another area that this writer sees as one which must be studied is in the area of teacher attitudes towards whole language instruction, and on how education on whole language philosophy affects a teacher's interest in implementing whole language instruction in their classrooms. Some teachers this author spoke with were very against the idea of whole language, saying their main goal in kindergarten was to get the children to learn to sit still and behave in such a way so that any

instruction would be possible.

Some teachers also complained about the cumbersome and time consuming record keeping required by whole language advocates. I believe that another area for research and development can address this issue on evaluation of student progress. Many teachers today must cope with large classes and little, if any, paraprofessional help. They see whole language as being too time consuming and cumbersome, and therefore not practical in their classroom situations. These teachers need help in finding ways to organize their classrooms for whole language instruction.

Pickering (1989) discusses the importance of whole language instruction:

"The past thirty years has been a time of experimentation and debate in literacy teaching. Advocates in methods for teaching reading and writing and the increased funding for literacy instruction (Chapter I programs, eg.) have heightened awareness of the need for new directions in teaching reading and writing. Nonetheless, problems with literacy teaching persist. Incidence of adult illiteracy is still too high, and large segments of our society, particularly minorities, continue to be undereducated. Clearly, refined approaches to literacy teaching are needed, not just in early childhood and elementary education, but at higher levels as well. Whole language provides a promising signal that techniques and theories of literacy instruction are advancing." (p. 149).

I have attempted to show in this paper that John Dewey's philosophy that education must come through a child's meaningful experiences with real situations has been restated many times by many researchers from various disciplines. In a major publication on reading, Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson et al, 1985), this philosophy was restated as evidenced by the following:

"Learning about reading and writing ought to occur in situations where written language serves functions such as to entertain, to inform, or to direct. In other words, children need to learn about the functions of written language and about what adults mean when they talk about 'reading.'" (p. 32).

As has been shown in this paper, reading instruction in kindergarten needs to be meaningful and functional, and methods of achieving this have been discussed. But still there are many schools where children are not experiencing enough whole language instruction. It has also been shown that the ideas about keeping language whole for children have been around for a long time. Despite this fact, many children are still being taught through meaningless, isolated drills that focus on graphophonic relationships.

It seems fitting to quote from Kenneth Goodman in Aaron et al (1990b) here:

"My perspective on whole language is that I can't take credit for it. Whole language is, in a sense, a set of

ideas that have coalesced, a view of education--not just reading--whose time has come. And the ideas of mine which are being incorporated into whole language and which I am being given credit for, that credit goes to the teachers who have been able to take those ideas and make them practical realities in their classrooms." (p, 378).

In Learning to Read: The Great Debate, Chall (1967) states that teachers have a central role in teaching reading. She said it is the teacher and what the teacher does that seems to make the greatest difference for children in their learning to read. This idea, that the most important element in teaching reading is the teacher, has been restated many times by many leaders in the field of reading. McLane and McNamee (1990) state the following:

"How literacy ultimately develops will depend on whether writing and reading become meaningful parts of the child's life. This, in turn, will depend on people who are important to the child--both inside and outside of school--and on the messages they communicate about the child's development as a writer and reader." (p. 144).

A most important goal for kindergarten teachers must be to foster voluntary reading habits among children so they will develop positive attitudes towards reading and choose reading as a leisure time activity for themselves. A well structured and planned classroom library, reading aloud of quality children's literature, and allowing much time for independent interactions with books, are valuable resources in reaching that goal. As has

been stated and restated many times in the literature reviewed by this author, children learn to read by reading. The idea of wholeness is important because reading is a part of language, which is a linguistic process formed by meaning.

Continued debate and research will change some ideas about whole language instruction. But the practices and beliefs in whole language today will form the basis of changes in whole language instruction of the future.

Finally, whatever research is done in this area, I believe that with comprehension as the goal in reading instruction, the view that reading begins in the mind of the reader, and not with the print on the page, will continue to be an important consideration in whatever debates do occur in the future.

Annotated References

Aaron, I.E., Chall, J.S., Durkin, D., Goodman, K.S., and Strickland, D.S. (1990b). The past, present and future of literacy education: Comments from a panel of distinguished educators, Part II. The Reading Teacher. 43, 370-380.

This article presents a transcript of a panel discussion of five leaders in the field of reading that the editors of The Reading Teacher conducted at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association in New Orleans in May, 1989. In this segment of the discussion, the educators discussed the politics of literacy education and the challenges facing literacy educators in years to come.

Goodman, K.S. (1989). Whole language research: Foundations and development. Elementary School Journal. 90, 207-221.

This article gives an overview of the history of the whole language movement. The evolution of the term "whole language" is discussed and is compared to its current meaning and usage. The influences from the fields of philosophy, psychology, linguistics and education on the development of the whole language movement are discussed. Influences from early educational movements in the United States, England and New Zealand are also discussed.

Johns, J. (1989). Reflections on Whole Language, Whole Word, and Phonics. Viewpoint. ERIC, ED 312 613.

The recurring debate between whole language advocates and skills based advocates may have been sparked by the reading profession's current emphasis on whole language. Each side has claims and counterclaims as to their validity. But the simplistic claims from each side are continuing to resurface.

Some teachers have already discovered ways to combine the strengths of each side in their instruction. These teachers do not care about the rhetoric, but instead they apply what works for their students in order to strive for their primary mission--developing literacy among their students.

Teale, W.H. (1982). Toward a theory of how children learn to read and write naturally. Language Arts. 59, 555-570.

This article discusses research and instances of children learning to read and write at home without formal instruction. The development of such natural literacy is discussed. Teale argues that literacy development is largely a social process, involving both teaching and learning.

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